

## MT. ETNA SCHOOL HISTORY

This is an attempt at compiling a brief historical sketch of the Mt. Etna school, which was located in the southeast part of Salt Creek Township, Decatur County, Indiana -- just where the counties of Franklin, Ripley, and Decatur, corner. The sources of this material are from the original deed, newspaper clippings, U. S. Army discharge, and notes left by my father, Ambrose Hickman. About forty years ago, he, with the assistance of Letta Collicott Williams, wrote a fairly complete history of this school. This history cannot be located, but many of my father's notes were, and have been used in this sketch.

The name Mt. Etna came from a steep bluff on the farm of James Parmer; who gave the name of Mt. Etna to that bluff is not known. The first school by the name of Mt. Etna was an old log, one room cabin, just across the Decatur County line, in Ray Township, Franklin County, on the farm of John Barton Hickman. One night it burned to the ground. The families of that neighborhood got together and decided to ask for a school to be established for the community in Decatur County. Why Decatur County was selected of the three counties is not now known.

Among my father's papers is the original deed of James Moody, Rebecca Ann Moody, and James Parmer and America Parmer to Salt Creek Township. Only James Moody could sign his name. The other three signed by "mark."

In later years the "e" was dropped from the Moody name, and the name in that community became "Moody." The deed reads as follows: "On the part of the said James Moody and Rebecca Moody, commencing at the corner stone between the lands of said Moody and Parmer, on the Harrison Road and running west, six and one half rods, thence north, fourteen rods, thence east, six and one half rods, thence south to the place of beginning and on the part of the said James Parmer and America Parmer, commencing at the above described corner stone and running east five rods, thence north fourteen rods, thence west five rods, thence south to the place of beginning, being a part of the south east quarter of section No. twenty eight (next word is undistinguishable) range eleven, containing one acre and one rod."

This deed was executed on February 4, 1865 by Joel Colson, Justice of Peace, and was received for recording in Greensburg, Indiana April 4, 1865 at 1 P. M. o'clock, and is recorded in deed Book, Volume 8, page 31. James R. Cox was the Decatur County recorder. The price paid by Salt Creek Township for this property was \$10. The name of the trustee of Salt Creek Township does not appear on the deed.

A frame one room school house was built on this property and it is thought that the first school term opened in November of 1865, with Tichard W. Bowen as teacher. The "old timers" of the community always spoke of Richard W. Bowen as being from Kingston, but Kingston must have been his home after teaching at Mt. Etna. He was a Civil War Veteran of Company A, 82nd Rgt. Ind. Infantry Volunteers, and his discharge, now in possession of his granddaughter, Mrs. Marie Clark, Greensburg, shows he was discharged on the 6th day of July, 1865 at Madison, Indiana and that he was a native of Worcester County, Maryland. My late husband, Ralph Bowen Linville, was his grandson. Perhaps Mr. Bowen came up through southern Indiana from Madison, and was hired as



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the first teacher of the new Mt. Etna school. Leonard Perry Hart and Lafayette Hickman are known to have been two of the pupils of that first school term in the new school. Mr. Bowen was said to have been a very brilliant scholar himself, but was not considered a practical man by the school patrons. He loved to read poetry to his pupils, and this was considered not contributing much to preparing the boys and girls of that day, for their rugged life ahead. How many terms Mr. Bowen taught at Mt. Etna is not a matter of record, but it was more than one.

After Mr. Bowen came a man, quite the opposite. His name is obscure, but if my memory of "tales told" serves me correctly it was Sample. He ruled by the "birch rod" so he satisfied even less than did Mr. Bowen.

The following account of the next few years at Mt. Etna, are taken directly from my father's notes.

"My first days at school are very vivid in my mind. They were spent at Mt. Etna, and I started to school in the fall of 1872. My first teacher, and for several years thereafter, was my cousin Ellen Moody, of the New Pennington neighborhood. She was a very talented forceful woman, quick to speak her mind, and high tempered. There were about 60 pupils in the winter months, some of them young men and women. Many is the time I have heard her tell the big boy, "Unless you mend your ways, you will end up on the gallows." I guess we all mended our ways, for none of us, that I know of, ended there.

"Some of my school mates during those early years at Mt. Etna were: Anderson, Ed, and Lucinda Shouse; Joe, Isaac, Lizzie, Louise, Martha and Rose Parnor -- Rose was deaf and dumb and was later sent to school in Indianapolis -- Fred, John, and Charles Myers; John Korte; Ben and Amelia Hibbler; Mary and Louise Hackman; Louise, Annie, Mary and Sophia Miller; Frank, Williard, Celia, William Henry, Milton, Ed, Sereptia, Isaac and Nathaniel Hart; John, Amelia and Mary Ceese; Robert Brooks; Jerry Whitten; Frank Wise; Sherman Risinger; Curtis, Harmon, and Jacob Collicott; Fred, Bill, Henry, Annie, Sophia, and Mary Mellow, and my own brothers Frances, Jared, Cash, Mort, and sister Am.

"After Ellen Moody came a teacher from Buena Vista, whose name was W. M. Gard, but was called "Kenny" Gard by everyone. Spelling matches, ciphering matches, singing schools, Friday afternoon Literaries, and wrestling matches became popular under his leadership. I recall a spelling match in May of 1875, I believe, in which Susie Wise represented New Pennington school, a mile and a half west of Mt. Etna, and I represented Mt. Etna school. I soon lost to Susie. I believe Susie went on to Greensburg, where a contest was held in the Court House, and won that contest. As I recall it, some western land offered by a James Hart was to be the prize. Whether Susie got the land or not I do not know -- but Susie could spell. Susie married my cousin, John Moody.

"Kenny Gard frequently cut the boys' hair at recess and noon. One recess he had finished just half of a hair cut for Curt Collicott when recess time was up. Mr. Gard told Curt he would go to his home that



night and finish the job. However, we all suspected he was more interested in Curt's pretty half-sister than he was in finishing the job of hair cutting.

"Mr. Gard was my teacher for the rest of the time I attended school, and it seems to me, now, that he was a good teacher, for we learned the three R's rather thoroughly.

"A disaster took place in the Mt. Etna neighborhood on my ninth birthday -- February 13, 1876. A warm Sunday afternoon, and while my mother was away helping care for a very sick child -- Willie Parmer -- my sister Am and I took off our shoes and stockings and went barefoot on the "chip pile." About 7 P. M. that night a storm struck and dipped down in the Hart neighborhood about one and one-half miles southwest of Mt. Etna. Houses and barns were blown down and much timber felled, but no loss of life. Our school house was in the path of the storm, and only the foundation was left. Luckily it was at night, and no one in the building. Our house and barn were in the path of the storm, the barn went, and all our house but the one room, in which Mother had shoved us kids, all under the bed.

"For the rest of that term we had school in an old one room log house that stood in the yard of the James Parmer farm, just a short distance east of the school property -- only now the farm was owned by George Wise. It was great fun having school in the log house, heated by a big fireplace, no desks, no chairs, books or anything but the teacher, and a flock of eager boys and girls. All the big boys were kept out the rest of that term to help clean up the fallen timber, saw lumber, and help rebuild houses and barns.

"During the summer a new brick school house was built on the site of the old school. Door in one end, three windows on each side, and one end a solid wall. Inside, this solid wall, provided a place for a wonderful slate black board. Also there was a belfry, with a bell that could be heard all over the neighborhood. This was the usual pattern for the one room schools in that day, and for a good many years to come. Kenny Gard taught for several years in this new building."

This is the end of my father's notes on his school life at Mt. Etna School. I have a Currier and Ives picture, "The Rival Queens," given to my father in the spring of 1877 by W. M. Gard for "perfect attendance."

Records seem to indicate that W. M. Gard was followed by Henrietta Anderson, a local girl of 19 years of age. She had been a pupil at Mt. Etna school, perhaps under Mr. Bowen, and lived only a "stone's throw" from the school, on the farm that was known in my days as the Schutte farm. I recall one of my uncles saying that many of the big boys in the community went back to school that winter for three month's term -- more interested in the teacher than in the subject matter. Miss Anderson was a direct descendant of Thomas Jefferson. More about her later in this history.

Here we have a lapse of a few years as to any information about the school or the teachers.



William Jenkins of New Point taught at Mt. Etna for several years, and the time seems to have been in the late 80's or early 90's.

Miss Lillie Hoff of New Point came to Mt. Etna to teach in the fall of '93 or '94. In the fall of '98 she was followed by Miss Letta Collicott. Miss Collicott was the young sister of Curtis, Harmen, and Jacob Collicott who had attended Mt. Etna during my father's time. In the meantime her parents had moved from the farm near Mt. Etna to one about two miles west of the former home, so Miss Collicott never attended school there. Miss Collicott was my first teacher, and stayed in our home and I loved her dearly. When her son, Andrew, started to school, I was his first teacher. Miss Hoff and Miss Collicott married brothers, Logan and Charles Williams of New Pennington.

Miss Collicott was followed in the fall of 1904 by a young man, 19 years of age, Grover Harding, of near New Point. He was quite a brilliant young man, and frequently was far over our heads. He always spelled our school "Mt. Aetna" which we resented heartily! He spent the summer, after his first year of teaching, in Colorado. Returning home in the late summer, he died shortly of tuberculosis.

He was followed by Miss Elva Puttmann of New Point. She was a cousin of Grover Harding. Miss Puttmann drove from New Point each day, a distance of three and one-half miles. That was quite a feat in the days of mud roads and a horse and buggy. Miss Puttmann was the first teacher who did not "board" in the community.

By this time, Mt. Etna enrollment had dwindled to 14, and 7 of these were transfers from Ripley and Franklin Counties. As a result of this, Mt. Etna school closed its doors, never to reopen, in April, 1907. Miss Puttmann had taught two years here. So the life span of Mt. Etna school was from 1865 to 1907. We were consolidated with New Pennington and became a two room school.

As I recall the last pupils at the Mt. Etna school were: Roll, Joe, Ethel and Mamie Parner; Everet, Mabel, and Grace Parner, Olin Gormel; Oscar Shouse; Helen and Harry Strunck; Arthur and Clarence Myers and Anna Lee Hickman.

Some of the events that were typical of the social aspect of the school in the community should be noted, to round out the History, for the school was the community. One of the most looked forward to events of the school year was the "pie supper" or "box supper" as the case might be. This was held early in the fall, soon after the opening of the school term. The purpose was to make some money to buy the "Reading Circle" books. How we loved those books! They were our only source of outside reading. The supper was usually held on Friday night, and early on Friday afternoon milk, eggs, and sugar would be collected from the patrons and brought to the school house. Someone went to New Point for ice, and borrowed Henry Wolfe's ten gallon ice cream freezer -- usually my father made that trip. The big boys turned the freezer and when the cream was frozen it was packed in sawdust and ice to keep until evening. Each family furnished a cake, and an ice cream and cake stand was set up. The older boys and girls worked in this stand, and the younger ones worked in the candy and peanut stand. The prize job was working in the Fish Pond. That was usually settled



by drawing lots. The candy, gum, peanuts and items for the Fish Pond usually came from Kramer's store in Batesville, purchased the Saturday before by the teacher. All the young ladies of the community brought a gayly decorated box containing her pie, or supper. These were auctioned off, and young men were known to go as high as 85¢, and on one rare occasion, \$1, for the box brought by the girl of his choice. But it was great fun and all the community turned out for the event. However, on Saturday morning the teacher and some of the pupils had to clean the school and grounds, to be ready for school as usual on Monday morning.

Christmas was celebrated by a "program" given on the afternoon of the day school closed for a week's vacation -- which was December 24, if December 24 fell on a school day. This was the time the mothers and little brothers and sisters usually came. Each pupil would "speak a piece," and there were songs and dialogues. The school room would be decorated in cedar, and sometimes a Christmas tree -- we were quite festive. The teacher treated -- candy, nuts and usually an orange. Sometimes an orange for each little brother and sister that mama brought along.

Spring had its special day for us, too. Each spring, on a nice warm Friday afternoon, we had a Flower Hunt. After school "took up" on some such day, the teacher would announce that this would be a good afternoon to hunt wild flowers. Books were hurriedly put away, and off we raced, teacher with us, down through L. P. Hart's woods, along the banks of little Laughery Crick, through Mrs. Schutte's woods, and then, much more slowly, up the hill, back to the school house. It had been a happy afternoon, we had found many wild flowers, for both woods had many varieties. I wonder if any are left there now or did we destroy all of them!

On the "last day of school," again we usually had a planned program. Again we "spoke pieces," had drills and songs. I remember one year Miss Collicott gave a demonstration with Indian Clubs. Miss Collicott had been to Normal School at Terre Haute, and had taken "Gymnastics." We thought it was wonderful! If a teacher were well liked and if her return was desired by the patrons, there was usually a "surprise" dinner by the patrons and friends in the community. All gathered at a designated place, with well filled baskets, converged on the school, knocked on the door, and when the "surprised" teacher opened the door, the assembled group greeted her with yells of "surprise, surprise!" The "last day" was also the time for giving out awards. These were usually given for "perfect attendance" and "proficiency in spelling."

An important event to the teacher and pupils, during the school year, was the Annual Visit of the County Superintendent of Schools. Elmer Jerman held this position in Decatur County for a number of years. I recall his visits to Mt. Etna. Sometimes he talked to us, but mostly he listened to the classes, being conducted by the teacher. We always tried to do our very best then, for we sensed it had something to do with our teacher's "success grade" given each year by the County Superintendent.

Mt. Etna school house also served for "extra curricular activities" although that phrase was unknown then. From the 1890's until about



1904 Sunday School was held at the school house each Sunday morning. Occasionally a visiting minister came and delivered a sermon. I can remember T. J. Hart as a student at Moores Hill College doing so. On Sunday evenings "Christian Endeavor" was held for the young people of the community. One June Sunday we had a Children's Day Program. Dr. Jerman, of New Point, was always much interested in the activities of our little community, and as a special treat for the children taking part in the Program, he sent five gallons of the largest strawberries we had ever seen. After the program all the children were treated to strawberries and cream. The little Sunday School always sent a "delegation" to the 4th of July celebration -- which is a story in itself. The same youngsters who went to Mt. Etna school in the winter were, for the most part, the same ones who attended the Sunday School.

Sometimes a medicine show came through the neighborhood and had a "one night stand" at the school house. "Patriotic" meetings were sometimes held there too. I remember Neil McCallum, editor of the Batesville Tribune, speaking one afternoon after a "flag raising" at the "corner" between Decatur and Franklin Counties. I judge now that the meeting was more a "Republican" meeting than a "patriotic" one -- if I remember Mr. McCallum correctly. "Flag raising" was another story of the Mt. Etna community. Was it common elsewhere in Indiana?

The bell of the school house was a fire alarm for the community. I can remember the ringing of the bell when Mr. Miller's barn burned, and also for Mrs. Schutte's barn.

Mt. Etna school sent many young men and women from its doors -- a few achieved fame and recognition, but most of us did not. Perhaps the two best known and most famous of the men were Jacob Grant Collicott and Thomas Jefferson Hart. Mr. Collicott became an educator of national fame. He served as city superintendent of the Indianapolis City Schools, for a number of years with marked success. At the time of his death in 1937 he was the city Superintendent of the Columbus, Ohio schools. He also had served in administrative positions in the northwest. Mr. Collicott was a brother of Miss Collicott who taught at Mt. Etna. The friendship of Mr. Collicott and my father, from their boyhood days at Mt. Etna school, continued throughout their lives. Thomas Jefferson Hart was ordained in the Methodist Church and was one of the best known and beloved ministers of southeastern Indiana. Rev. Hart held pastorates in North Vernon, Dillsboro, Versailles, Brownstown and Barth Place in Indianapolis. He died in 1938 in Indianapolis. His wife was the former Lydia Gornel, who had also been a pupil at Mt. Etna.

Of the women who attended Mt. Etna, perhaps Henrietta Anderson achieved the most fame. After her brief teaching career at Mt. Etna, she, with her family, went to Kansas. There she graduated from a medical college. She was the first woman M. D. to hold membership in the Medical Association of Kansas City. For a number of years she was the secretary of that organization. She practiced her profession for many years in Kansas City. She was the only pupil of Mt. Etna school who also was a teacher there.

Others who went on to higher education and entered the teaching profession were: John F. Parner; Effa Parner; Annie Korte; Anna Lee



Hickman; Ethel Parmer; Mabel Parmer; Grace Parmer and Mamie Parmer. John F. Parmer, after teaching in Purdue, left the teaching profession and is still active with an architectural firm in Chicago. Effa Parmer McKee retired from the Noblesville Public School system two years ago. Annie Korte Siebert and Mamie Parmer Metz have not taught for some years. Anna Lee Hickman Linville retired last June from Southern Seminary Junior College in Buena Vista, Virginia. Ethel Parmer Barclay teaches in New Point schools. Mabel Parmer retired last June from Anderson High School, and Grace Parmer Ryan is teaching in the Jacksonville, Florida schools.

The Parmer family, in general, was a family talented in mechanical and engineering skills. Clyde, Ora, Claude, Roll and their cousin, Everet, all worked as such. Clyde also served as trustee of Salt Creek Township several terms. Roll, last year, retired as Superintendent of the Decatur County roads.

Bert and Arch Paramore and Howard Parmer, in early young manhood, learned telegraphy, and became telegraphers for the New York Central Railroad. Arch was stationed at Fairland at the time of his death. Howard went west and died in Nebraska. Bert was retired from the Union Station in Indianapolis and is spending his retirement years in Orlando, Florida.

This is an incomplete list of the activities and achievements of former Mt. Etna pupils. Many were "tillers of the soil" and "bakers of loaves" who made worthy contributions to the rural life of our great Hoosier state.

In the summer of 1908, my father, who then owned the farm that James and America Parmer owned in 1865, when the deed was made to Salt Creek Township, purchased from Salt Creek Township the Mt. Etna school property of "one acre and one rod," for the sum of \$66.66. John A. Meyer was the trustee of Salt Creek Township. Later the west half of the property was deeded to my father's sister, Am Parmer, who then owned the farm, originally owned by James and Rebecca Ann Moodey. Thus the original boundry lines of the farms were reestablished. Eventually the school house was torn down, and the bricks sold to go into the construction of other buildings. The equipment and Reading Circle books were moved to the New Pennington school, and the bell taken to the New Point school.

Today only the well remains as physical evidence of Mt. Etna school. To some of us -- who are now the old timers -- there will always be a Mt. Etna, for it holds many dear memories for us of teachers and school mates. We were in no wise different or unusual. There were many such one room schools in Indiana. But those of us who knew them are glad that we had that experience. Perhaps we were richer in the "good old days" than we realized.

This classic, so well written, has a particular appeal to the editor, because he knew so many of the people involved. The story is typical of any community and is further proof that Mt. Etna like any other crossroad, abounds in its local history, waiting only for someone to tell the story. Thank you, Anna Lee Linville, for a fine job, well done. - ed.



### A PIONEER WEDDING

The wedding was an attractive feature of pioneer life. For a long time after the first settlement of the Territory, the people married young. There was no distinction of rank, and very little of fortune. On these accounts, the first impression of love generally resulted in marriage. The family establishment cost but little labor--nothing more. A description of a wedding in the olden time will serve to show the progress made in society, as well as preserve an important phase of history. The marriage was always celebrated at the house of the bride; and she was generally left to choose the officiating clergyman. A wedding, however, engaged the attention of the whole neighborhood. It was anticipated by both old and young with eager expectation. In the morning of the wedding day the groom and his intimate friends assembled at the house of his father, and, after due preparation, departed, en masse, for the "mansion" of his bride. The journey was sometimes made on horseback, sometimes on foot, and sometimes in farm wagons or carts. It was always a merry journey; and, to insure merriment, the bottle was taken along. On reaching the house of the bride, the marriage ceremony took place; and then dinner or supper was served. After the meal, the dancing commenced, and generally lasted till the following morning. The figures of the dances were three and four handed reels, or square sets and jigs. The commencement was always a square four, which was followed by what the pioneers called "jigging;" that is, two of the four would single out for a jig, and were followed by the remaining couple. The jigs were often accompanied with what was called "cutting out;" that is, when either of the parties became tired of the dance, on intimation, the place was supplied by some one of the company, without any interruption of the dance. In this way the reel was often continued until the musician was exhausted.

About nine or ten o'clock in the evening, a deputation of young ladies stole off the bride, and put her to bed. In doing this, they had to ascend a ladder from the kitchen to the upper floor, which was composed of loose boards. Here, in this pioneer bridal chamber, the young, simple-hearted girl was put to bed by her enthusiastic friends. This done, a deputation of young men escorted the groom to the same apartment, and placed him snugly by the side of his bride. The dance still continued; and if seats were scarce, which was generally the case, "every young man, when not engaged in the dance, was obliged to offer his lap as a seat for one of the girls; and the offer was sure to be accepted." During the night's festivities, spirits were freely used, but seldom to great excess. The infair was held on the following evening, when the same order of exercises was observed.

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### THE LAST MEETING

The Kemble room was taxed to its capacity to hear Miss Ruth Snyder of Rockville present her program on "Covered Bridges of Indiana."

Her photography was outstanding as was her knowledge of the subject and love for her hobby.

Miss Snyder, an authority in this field, related interesting facts concerning many of the bridges in this locality and the clever



interposing of slides showing the flowers and foliage of the country side created an atmosphere which made all present feel that they, too, had taken a most enjoyable trip through rural Indiana.

In conclusion, she said that beauty can be enjoyed right here in our own home state if we only take the time to discover it.

F. S. E.

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OUR GROWING LIBRARY

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION FOR THE STATE OF INDIANA - DECEMBER 1852. This little volume, devoid of statistics, has a very interesting chapter on FEMALE TEACHERS by the first superintendent - W. C. Larrabee. This was a brief in behalf of employing lady teachers.

HISTORY OF INDIANA - illustrated, published in 1879. This leather-bound volume of 798 pages has an introductory chapter on pioneer life in Indiana and a story of one phase of that period is carried elsewhere in this issue of the BULLETIN. The two books are a gift to the Society by Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Ritter of Menlo Park, California.

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MEMBERSHIP--Open to everyone having an interest in history and his heritage. The annual dues are \$1.00 each, payable in advance. The fiscal year ends Dec. 31. Please direct all applications and renewals to the Recording Secretary.

FALL FIELD TRIP--As previously announced, our field trip will take us to the St. Paul-St. Omer area, this coming October. The chairman has been appointed and knowing how capable he is, we are looking forward to the afternoon with a great deal of anticipation.

REMINISCENCES EARLY SHELBY AND DECATUR COUNTIES by J. R. French  
This article which first appeared in part in the last issue of the BULLETIN will be concluded in the next issue, this due to circumstances beyond our control.



THE BULLETIN

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Volume 1 - No. 21

Greensburg, Indiana

August 8, 1964

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mr. John R. Meyer- Milwaukee  
Mr. R. Sherman Boyd- Indpls.  
Miss Ruth Moulton- Union City  
Mr. Raymond Carr (463)

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PARKER'S POND

Again our hosts are the William Parkers. Their home is located approximately eight miles South-west of Greensburg in Clay township.

ROUTE FROM GREENSBURG

Follow SR 3 and 46 to the Junction West of Greensburg. Here turn left or South on SR 3. Continue South on SR 3 to the second cross road. (Look for the sign here). Turn right or West on a stone road. LOOK FOR THE FLAG POLE ON THE RIGHT AT APPROX. ONE-QUARTER MILE.

ROUTE FROM WESTPORT

Follow Sr 3 North toward Greensburg. After passing the yellow flasher at Letts, turn left or West at the second cross road. (Look for the sign here). Turn left or West on a stone road. LOOK FOR THE FLAG POLE ON THE RIGHT AT APPROX. ONE-QUARTER MILE.

PICNIC AFTERWARD

MR. AND MRS. PARKER HEREBY EXTEND AN INVITATION TO ANY OF THE MEMBERS OR THEIR GUESTS TO BRING THEIR PICNIC BASKETS IF THEY WISH TO DO SO. TABLES WILL BE PROVIDED.

OCCASION: Summer Meeting

SPEAKER: Mrs. E. A. Porter

DATE: Sunday evening, August 23,  
1964. 4:00 P.M. FAST TIME

PLACE: Parker's Pond

Mrs. Porter, a devoted member of the Society, will speak on one of her favorite subjects- CEMETERIES. Hers is a cause to which she is very much dedicated. Mrs. Porter abhors the neglect and vandalism that occurs daily in some of our cemeteries, and is quite eloquent in saying so. She will have a message that will appeal to our good members- our only regret being that those who should be there will not be numbered among those present.

BRING AS MANY GUESTS AS YOU LIKE!  
EVERYBODY IS WELCOME!

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THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS 1964

President-----Loren Garner  
1st. Vice-President--Norman Billieu  
2nd. Vice-President--Willard Martin  
Corresponding Secy.-----Mrs. Robert  
Dale Brown, RFD 1, St. Paul, Ind.  
Recording Secy.-----Miss Helen K.  
Bussell, 711 North East Street,  
Greensburg, Indiana  
Treasurer-----Miss Kathryn Taney

\* \* \* \* \*

SUGGESTION

IF SO INCLINED, WHY NOT VISIT THE DECATUR COUNTY RAILWAY MUSEUM AT WESTPORT BEFORE ATTENDING THE AFFAIR AT PARKER'S POND? YOU WILL ENJOY THEIR RIDE AND DISPLAY.



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A frame one room school house was built on this property and it is thought that the first school term opened in November of 1865, with Tichard W. Bowen as teacher. The "old timers" of the community always spoke of Richard W. Bowen as being from Kingston, but Kingston must have been his home after teaching at Mt. Etna. He was a Civil War Veteran of Company A, 82nd Rgt. Ind. Infantry Volunteers, and his discharge, now in possession of his granddaughter, Mrs. Marie Clark, Greensburg, shows he was discharged on the 6th day of July, 1865 at Madison, Indiana and that he was a native of Worcester County, Maryland. My late husband, Ralph Bowen Linville, was his grandson. Perhaps Mr. Bowen came up through southern Indiana from Madison, and was hired as



the first teacher of the new Mt. Etna school. Leonard Perry Hart and Lafayette Hickman are known to have been two of the pupils of that first school term in the new school. Mr. Bowen was said to have been a very brilliant scholar himself, but was not considered a practical man by the school patrons. He loved to read poetry to his pupils, and this was considered not contributing much to preparing the boys and girls of that day, for their rugged life ahead. How many terms Mr. Bowen taught at Mt. Etna is not a matter of record, but it was more than one.

After Mr. Bowen came a man, quite the opposite. His name is obscure, but if my memory of "tales told" serves me correctly it was Sample. He ruled by the "birch rod" so he satisfied even less than did Mr. Bowen.

The following account of the next few years at Mt. Etna, are taken directly from my father's notes.

"My first days at school are very vivid in my mind. They were spent at Mt. Etna, and I started to school in the fall of 1872. My first teacher, and for several years thereafter, was my cousin Ellen Moody, of the New Pennington neighborhood. She was a very talented forceful woman, quick to speak her mind, and high tempered. There were about 60 pupils in the winter months, some of them young men and women. Many is the time I have heard her tell the big boy, "Unless you mend your ways, you will end up on the gallows." I guess we all mended our ways, for none of us, that I know of, ended there.

"Some of my school mates during those early years at Mt. Etna were: Anderson, Ed, and Lucinda Shouse; Joe, Isaac, Lizzie, Louise, Martha and Rose Parmor -- Rose was deaf and dumb and was later sent to school in Indianapolis -- Fred, John, and Charles Myers; John Korte; Ben and Amelia Hibbler; Mary and Louise Hackman; Louise, Annie, Mary and Sophia Miller; Frank, Williard, Celia, William Henry, Milton, Ed, Sereptia, Isaac and Nathaniel Hart; John, Amelia and Mary Ceese; Robert Brooks; Jerry Whitten; Frank Wise; Sherman Risinger; Curtis, Harmen, and Jacob Collicott; Fred, Bill, Henry, Annie, Sophia, and Mary Mellow, and my own brothers Frances, Jared, Cash, Mort, and sister Am.

"After Ellen Moody came a teacher from Buena Vista, whose name was W. M. Gard, but was called "Kenny" Gard by everyone. Spelling matches, ciphoring matches, singing schools, Friday afternoon Literaries, and wrestling matches became popular under his leadership. I recall a spelling match in May of 1875, I believe, in which Susie Wise represented New Pennington school, a mile and a half west of Mt. Etna, and I represented Mt. Etna school. I soon lost to Susie. I believe Susie went on to Greensburg, where a contest was held in the Court House, and won that contest. As I recall it, some western land offered by a James Hart was to be the prize. Whether Susie got the land or not I do not know -- but Susie could spell. Susie married my cousin, John Moody.

"Kenny Gard frequently cut the boys' hair at recess and noon. One recess he had finished just half of a hair cut for Curt Collicott when recess time was up. Mr. Gard told Curt he would go to his home that



THE BULLETIN

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Volume 1 - No.20

Greensburg, Indiana

March 21, 1964

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mrs. Emery Smith  
Miss Mary Lou Linville  
Mrs. Emma Taylor  
Mrs. Donna Nease Hatfield  
Mr. Wayne E. Rohlfing-Indpls.  
Mrs. Pansy Reed  
Mr. Harold B. Ogden  
Mrs. Harold B. Ogden  
Mrs. Sarilda Robbins  
Mrs. Grace Carder  
Mr. Allen Hanna  
Mrs. Allen Hanna  
Mr. Raymond Patrick  
Mrs. Lillian Turner Patrick  
Mrs. William Ponsler  
Mrs. Pauline Meyer Siefert-  
Leesburg, Fla.  
Mrs. Walter Tonyes-  
Milroy  
Mrs. R. L. Cannon-Pomona, Calif.  
Mrs. Cliff Byard (459)

\* \* \* \* \*

A Civil War Soldier's RECIPE FOR THE ITCH:

"Take one wine glass of fresh un-slaked lime, two of flour of sulphur, and ten of water. Put in a porcelain kettle and place it over the fire, stirring it all the time with a wooden paddle until the sulphur disappears on the surface of the water. Then bottle it up closely and it is ready to use. Wash the patient well with warm water, then saturate every part of the body with the fluid; in half an hour wash off in warm water again. Put on clean linen and you are cured."

ed- Thank you "OLD SERGEANT" of New Albany. Now do you have a cure for poison ivy?

OCCASION: Spring Meeting

SPEAKER: Miss Ruth Snyder

DATE: Saturday night, April 4, 1964, 8:00 P.M. FAST TIME

PLACE: Kemble Room, Methodist Church, Greensburg, Ind.

Miss Snyder will speak on a subject--long awaited--COVERED BRIDGES. A native of Plymouth, where she states there are no covered bridges, she moved to Parke county and served 16 years as secretary to the superintendent of the State Sanitorium at Rockville. Parke county abounding in bridges of the covered variety, Miss Snyder became fascinated with them. As further evidence of her interest, she has slides of every covered bridge in Indiana--some now gone. An accomplished photographer, a rock hound and devoted to Indiana history, Miss Snyder comes to us well recommended, to present her favorite subject--COVERED BRIDGES.

THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS 1964

President-----Loren Garner  
1st. Vice-President-Norman Billieu  
2nd. Vice-President-Willard Martin  
Corresponding Secy.----Mrs. Robert Dale Brown, RFD 1, St. Paul, Ind.  
Recording Secy.-----Miss Helen K. Bussell, 711 North East Street, Greensburg, Indiana  
Treasurer-----Miss Kathryn Taney  
Editor-THE BULLETIN-Paul H. Huber  
\* \* \* \* \*

"Of 21 notable civilizations, 19 perished not from conquest from without, but from decay from within."

-Arnold Toynbee, British historian



## OUR GROWING LIBRARY

"INDIANA TEACHER" for January 1964 carries an illustrated article from the pen of our good member Robert W. Montgomery, titled "Flat Creek Deestrick School House Revisited?" Mr. Montgomery by quotes, his own reasoning and logic builds up a very good case in behalf of the Liberty school (one of record) being the "Flat Creek Deestrick School" as depicted in Edward Eggleston's immortal story "THE HOOSIER SCHOOL-MASTER." Members will recall that the Society visited the site of the Liberty school as located on the Vandalia road, along Buck Run. This was in 1961.....The author also made mention of the stile that was erected for the occasion. (The editor regarded the stile as more of a challenge for the wary ones--but contrary to his expectations, they all got over the stile). It is there yet today and this gives rise to the thought that the Society might erect a permanent stile in lieu of a tablet or marker to commemorate the spot. Tablets are expensive, require maintenance and are subject to vandalism.

"THE QUALITY OF RECENT AMERICAN VERSE" by its author Mr. Smiley Fowler. This is a neat little volume, well bound, published perhaps 30 years ago, with the author's comments on the works of such upcoming poets then as Markham, Kilmer, Vachel Lindsay and Joaquin Miller to mention a few.

A scrap book of the Civil War kept in Civil War times--the gift of Mr. Ralph B. Linville, Lexington, Virginia.

\* \* \* \* \*

FALL FIELD TRIP--Plans are being formulated to spend the afternoon in the St. Paul-St. Omer area. This community like any other abounds in local history and we feel confident there is someone locally who can tell us the story. Our PRESIDENT will welcome any suggestions or help to make this annual affair the same success that it has been in the past.....Now is the time for volunteers.

IT'S THOSE STARS AGAIN! - Our recording secretary informs us that some members have not yet paid their 1964 dues! Our own crude way of reminding you, will be to again mark your copy of the BULLETIN with stars \*\*\*\*\*. Asterisks may be the better word. But stars or asterisks it will be, if you are in arrears!

\* \* \* \* \*

"There is little that is more important for an American citizen to know than the history and traditions of his country. Without such knowledge, he stands uncertain and defenseless before the world, knowing neither where he has come from nor where he is going. With such knowledge, he is no longer alone but draws a strength far greater than his own from the cumulative experience of the past and a cumulative vision of the future.

- The late John F. Kennedy



### OUR OWN AUTHORS

Decatur County's contribution to Indiana's literary treasure has been far from negligible and is still in the creative process. However, adhering to the generally accepted theory that "nobody is his-tory until he's dead," this article will be devoted to those whose life work has ended. With, perhaps, a bit of footnote for those who may care to make some future research.

Early anthologies and critical articles gave high praise to several poems written by Will Cumback, who, though a native of Franklin County, was a long-time Greensburg resident. The lectures he wrote, following his term as lieutenant-governor of Indiana and in the federal revenue service, established his popularity on the platform. Cumback lived at the Franklin-North Street corner, now occupied by the Porter funeral home.

Next to the Eggleston brothers, probably the most prolific Decatur County writer was Orville Stewart, an Adams native, who began his literary career with prose and verse contributions to the Weekly New Era on West Main Street. He worked on Indianapolis papers, going from there to Chicago, Baltimore, Washington, New York and Paris. In his later years he did extensive magazine writing.

In the early 80s, when Ed Lock operated a small grocery store on South Franklin Street, his little pig-tailed daughter, Emma, wrote rhymes that somehow got themselves published in the Greensburg Review. And that was the beginning of a literary career for Emma Lock Scott, who became a valued member of the Nashville Tennessean editorial staff and attained fame as "The Tennessee Poet." "How the Flag Became Old Glory," published in 1915 by Macmillan, became one of her most popular books.

Lost to posterity is the adventure novel written by Robert Moulton and published in the New Era about 1889. A resident of New Point, Mr. Moulton attained some local fame as a painter.

Newspapers of that period recorded in leisurely manner the history of their time, and not infrequently the editors and contributors produced gems of wit and wisdom--much of it strongly tainted with personal favor or prejudice. Most prominent of the newspaper men of that era was William Orville Thomson, whose book, "The Oregon Trail," is now a collector's item.

Editors whose work was often influential in molding or guiding public opinion included T. C. Wayland. His "Nation," a Socialist organ held forth on West Main Street for a few years and had something of a national circulation. Moved to Kansas, it grew into considerable prominence for a brief time.

Oliver Perry McLain, a Jackson Township school teacher, edited the Democratic organ in Greensburg and was followed by James E. Mendenhall, W. H. Glidewell, Dr. Jesse Rucker and others. In the same period the Republican organs were in charge of Robert Montgomery, Andrew Willoughby, Luther D. Braden and James E. Caskey. The writing of these



nor did much to influence local public affairs. Mr. Caskey achieved a lot in the county's agricultural development.

Two religious organs were published in the county in the 1890s. One, the Baptist Observer, was edited by a Mr. Dickens in "newspaper row" on West Main Street, and the other was the Christian Union Messenger at Alert. Its publisher and editor was the Rev. W. H. Baker, a man of scholarly attainments and a highly skilled writer. About 1898 he moved his plant to Ostrander, Ohio.

Dr. Daniel Witwer Weaver wrote "Medicine As a Profession," one of a series of technical books edited by his brother for an eastern publishing house.

Davie Holmes, a Jackson Township product, a DeArmond Hotel clerk and a justice of the peace, conducted a humor column in the Evening Times for nearly a year. Using mostly local subject matter, he wrote in the Artemus Ward-Bill Nye style.

George E. Erdmann kept his literary light under a bushel for many years as he engaged in business and politics, and as postmaster, and also for a time after he and his wife went to Los Angeles for her health. There he got into real estate in a big way. Upon retiring he indulged his penchant for writing humorous verse. In the course of his last dozen years he produced three volumes of pungent poetry which delighted--and sometimes irritated--his friends "back home."

It was, of course, the Eggleston brothers, Edward and George Cary, who firmly established Decatur County's literary fame. Although they resided in the county only two years, they carried its scenes, incidents and composite characters into several highly successful pieces of semi-historical fiction. Chief of these were "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," "The Hoosier Schoolboy" and "Jack Shelby." Greensburg and Milford were the centers of their pioneer activity. In New York City the Egglestons were associated with the noted journalists from 1870 to past the turn of the century.

The late Mary Baen Thompson, best known as a teacher and book reviewer, was the author of a "Fact Detective" feature, the payment for which bought her a new automobile. Most of her writing was in the field of literary criticism and relating to her extensive travel.

Let us hope that posterity will deal kindly with those who now (1964) continue to carry on the county's literary tradition.

These will include Mrs. H. S. McKee, Mrs. W. C. Callaghan, Mrs. Ruth Paget Fessler (author of a romantic novel called "All That Glitters."), Mrs. Bertha Taylor Hopkins (writer of excellent short poems), Mrs. Dorothy Baylor (poet-painter), and Dorothy Buerger, whose short poems were collected in a small volume called "Little Feet In Heather," and the writer of feature articles, later becoming society editor of the Anderson Herald. Another is Mrs. Margaret Van Briggles, author of three books on religious themes.

In this group also are Newman Byard (a Westporter whose travels include at least 30 transcontinental trips) who has collected his



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"Plays, Laughs and Lyrics;" W. O. Thomson with a volume of verse, and Dr. Robert Levell, a prolific writer of religious verse.

Most successful of all Decatur-connected writers is James W. Bennett, the son of Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Bennett. A sufferer in boyhood from asthma, he was taken out of Greensburg high school to find health in California. Directly out of college he was appointed to a consular post in Shanghai, China, and there he amassed material for several novels with oriental flavor. Mr. Bennett enjoys a high rating in literary circles of New York, Toronto and London. Others, whose works remain to be assessed by future researchers include Smiley Fowler, author of several books of fiction, essays and verse, Grant Henderson, naturalist, poet, scholar, with two volumes to his credit-- Glenn Galbraith, long time teacher and prolific writer, with three volumes of poetry sold on local newsstands and Mrs. Joseph Grote, housewife and mother, who writes verse in her spare time when inspired.

ed's note--We regard this article, which was  
contributed, as an excellent summary  
of our literary past and present. We  
hope that we may have more like it.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### REMINISCENCES EARLY SHELBY AND DECATUR COUNTIES

J. R. French

(Published in Shelby  
Republican beginning  
January 4, 1907)

My father, Daniel French, was born in New Jersey, on August 9, 1791, and when two years old his parents moved to Pennsylvania. When of age he came to Lebanon, Ohio. He there became acquainted with my mother, who was born there in 1798 and she and my father were married. They settled in Lebanon. In 1820 father and my grandfather Tingle came to Shelby county, Ind., and father bought 160 acres east of Middletown. Part of the town is on his land. Grandfather Tingle bought a half section where Waldron now stands and gave it to his son John Tingle. He bought three eighties south of Middletown and gave it to his oldest daughter, Mrs. Solomon Beedle. He bought a half section on Conn's Creek above Middletown and gave the north quarter to Acenath Wood, his daughter, and the south quarter to his youngest daughter, Cathrine Boyd. He bought eighty acres near Shelbyville on the south-east and gave that to my mother. It remained in the family until after father's death. Beedle sold to John Bartley, and he to Aaron Lewis, and he to John Martin. He and his wife both died. Mr. Peek now owns it. John Tingle sold his land at Waldron to old Mr. Stroup. I don't know who owns it now. Wood sold theirs to David and Joseph Robertson. Boyd sold theirs to Mr. Hahn. My father's farm was divided after his death but is now owned by Peter Gross. After father was here in 1820 Jacob Creek bought eighty acres adjoining father's on the south and now owned by George Eck. So when father came out in the fall of 1821 to make improvements he brought William Haymond with him and they staid with Creek until they could build a cabin, probably the second in the county, as Creek's was the first. So father staid there all winter and built his cabin, fenced ten acres of land and cleared it after the



manner of those days, cut down and burned all the trees twelve inches and under and chopped around and burned trash around the other timber that they wanted to live. He went back to Lebanon in the spring and rented the eleven acres to Jacob Creek for one third of the corn, and the next fall, in 1822, he moved out, bringing his wife and one daughter two years old from Lebanon in an ox cart. There were no roads after you left Whitewater. Father got six bushels of corn for his share. Squirrels ate the rest and as there was none to buy he had to winter his oxen and one cow on that corn and beech brouse. He would cut down a tree every morning. About this time John Hendricks settled near Shelbyville, near where the still house now is, and afterward started a tan yard. Henry Moore settled on the west bank of Conn's Creek and there was not between where father lived, except Moore's, a cut-out road in the county. Shelbyville was not laid out nor any other town in the county. But people kept coming. There were Fountain's, Huffman's, Beedle's and Wicoff's south of us. Thomas Haymond's, Elijah Haymond's, Owen Haymond's east of us, and soon came Samuel Monroe and James Finley. Then on the north were Samuel Snider and Samuel Love. On the west Henry Ormsby. About Waldron was John Haymond, Henry Misner, Aaron Van Pelt, Enoch Tindall--but I am getting on too fast. This brings us up to '26 or '27. We will now go back to 1823 when father found his log cabin was not sufficient to take care of the traveling public. I have heard my mother say that the cabin floor was so covered over with travelers that she could not walk across the floor. Father made a kiln of brick, the first brick made in the county. There were only 1500 and he did not have any person to help him. He then built him a hewed log house, one and a half stories, with a brick chimney, the first brick chimney in the county. He made him a cellar walled with stone and then built a brick smoke house over the cellar. This house was the wonder of the country. We had beds up stairs to store away all who came along.

It was soon known that French had one of the grandest houses anywhere in the country and people traveling would make it a point to get to our house. Most people coming west had no money to pay for their land and had to live very economically for some time, and such a house was a wonder; but father, when he moved to Shelby county, had plenty of money for those days. When he started from Lebanon, Ohio, in his ox cart, having bought his land some time before, he had a few hundred dollars of his own, and grand-father gave mother one hundred, so when they got out of what they needed to live on father would hitch up the oxen to the cart and go down to Whitewater, the nearest place where they could get anything they wanted more than they raised, such as sugar and coffee and other groceries. There was no store anywhere near. Father had bought a horse and in the spring of 1823 mother rode that horse to Lebanon and later on, in the spring, rode him back, carrying in her arms a boy baby born on the 23rd of April 1823. I don't know of any other person in the neighborhood that early. Father hired help and soon had quite a clearing on his land. About this time there was talk of having a road cut out, as there was not a cut out road in the county. They would blaze the trees and travel through the woods and when it would get muddy they would cut the spice brush and blaze another road. It was not long after father built his hewed log house until they began to talk of having the Michigan road cut out--in fact it was cut out so teams could travel it, and people located their



cabins on it about this time. I made my appearance on the stage of action and the travel so increased that in 1826 father saw he would have to build more house, so he made a kiln of brick and in 1827 built a brick house joined up to the log house. It was full two stories high, two rooms long, so that gave us a six-roomed house. There was not another such house between Lawrenceburg and Indianapolis. On the east end of the house father built in to the wall with a black arch brick the figures 1827 so large they could be read for more than a quarter of a mile. About this time the State decided to cut out the road 100 feet wide and the sale was at my father's house to sell it out in sections to the lowest bidder. In the meantime John Walker laid out Shelbyville with the help of John Hendricks, who still lived in his cabin at the old tan yard west of the old still house. Father had built a large frame barn covered with shingles. Everything before this in the county was covered with clapboards weighted down with poles, so father's house was known from Cincinnati to Indianapolis as that wonderful brick house. About this time a town and store being very much needed, Middletown was laid out by William Haymond, and afterwards Joseph Cummins bought out Haymond and opened a store. This was in 1829 or 1830 and the town consisted of three families. Conner Cummins and Baxter Cummins kept a store and a hotel. Conner kept a saloon and Baxter a blacksmith shop.

If you will allow I will cross the line into Decatur county, about half a mile east of the Shelby county line, where was built the first grist mill here near where St. Paul is located on Mill creek and named the creek. There is almost a perpendicular fall over solid rock and here is where Jonathan Paul built a little mill not larger than a small one-roomed house. The overshot wheel was perhaps ten feet high, the room perhaps fifteen feet square, one pair of burrs that did the grinding and then there was a box where wheat was emptied after it was ground, and then you had to turn a crank until your flour was bolted. As little and insignificant as this mill was it beat going to White-water to get your bread stuff.

Now while I am over in Decatur I will mention that my father made the brick and built Paul a two story five-roomed house that is standing and is occupied yet and is a good house. It was built about the time that father built his house. Soon after he built another for old Mr. Jay C. Avery just below the mouth of Conn's creek on Flatrock and that is yet a pretty fair house. Jonathan Paul was the father of John Paul, the proprietor of St. Paul.

(To be continued)

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW POINT 1911-12

Barnard, Clyde, stock buyer.

Barnard, Wm., (Susan J.), stock buyer, Clyde, Florence, Ina.

Big 4 Stone Co., J. J. Puttmann, Pres., J. J. Kappes, Secy. and Treas.

Blair, James, (Mary), carpenter, Arthur, Earl, Stella.

Bornhorst, Jessie, Mrs.

Brown, U. G., (Elgie), general merchandise, Alden L., Ethel E.

Carr, Chas., Sr., (Mary), stone cutter, John, Chas., Jr.



Carr, Ida.  
Carr, Lander, (Charity), teamster.  
Carr, R. F., (M. H.), contractor pike.  
Castor, America, (Wid. Lewis).  
Castor, John, (Essie), lumber man, Zelma, Mary.  
Clark, Catherine, (Wid. John).  
Cole, Chas.  
Colson, Abner.  
Colson, Clarence, (Myrtle), farmer.  
Colson, F. P., (Ellen), farmer.  
Colson, John, (Carrie), bartender.  
Conley, Wm., (Effie), carpenter, Zelline.  
Dean, Asa, R R.  
Doane, Bertha.  
Dean, Edgar, (Nellie), railroader, Ernest.  
Dean, Ephraim, lab, Asa, Clara, Bertha, Sadie, Elisha, Chas.  
Deilks, Geo., (Anna), quarry man, Ora E., Myrtle.  
Demaree, Dan, (Nellie), stone cutter, Dana, Sub, Norma.  
Demaree, Samuel, (Anna), lab.  
Dokes, J. S., (Mahalia), quarry man, Joe, Nellie.  
Dowden, Chas., (Silvia), lab.  
Dowden, Minnie, (Wid. Amos Dr.)  
Engel, Flora, (Wid. Peter).  
Engel Geo., (Mollie), stone cutter.  
Ennebrock, Henry, (Thersesa), shoe maker, Lydia--Mayor Millinery.  
First National Bank, The, Cap stock \$25,000, John J. Puttmann Pres.,  
John Hoff, vice Pres., E. H. Spilman, cashier.  
Forsting, Rosa.  
Freeland, C. P., (Ella), foreman Big 4, Erma.  
Freeland, John, retired.  
Freeland, Leland, (Mary), farmer.  
Freeland, Webb, (Ida), quarry man.  
Freeland, Wm., (Mary), retired.  
Galbraith, Glenn, (Pearl), teacher.  
Gentry, Geo., (Alta), lab, Hazel.  
Gibberson, John, farmer, Glenn, Guy, Merl, John.  
Gilbert, Mary, (Wid. Geo.), Guy, Albert, Allie, Francis, Onida.  
Gilbert, Mary E., (Wid. Geo. W.), Irene, John.  
Glidewell, Holman, (Lulu), teamster, Earl, Forest, Mabel, Iva.  
Green, Harmon, (Mary A.), livery man, farmer, boarding house.  
Gross, Nelville, Frank, Blanch.  
Grow, O. P., (Dora), barber.  
Grow, Peter, (Lizzie) contractor, carpenter, Horace.  
Gwinn, Richard, (Emma), rural mail carrier.  
Hass, Wm., (Ida), carpenter.  
Harding, Ed, (Julia), lab, Olive, Georgia, Alvin, Carl.  
Harding, Alfred, (Josephine), lab, Burl, Minnie, Clem.  
Harding, John, (Martha), lab, Halsey.  
Higdon, Emaline, (Wid. Wm.)  
Higdon, Forest, farmer.  
Higdon, Louisa, (Wid. Geo.).  
Hilliard, C. E., (Ocie), engineer.  
Hilliard, John L., (Martha J.), clerk, and notary, John H.  
Hilliard, Wm. H., (Jennie), lab, Birtus A.  
Hoff, John, (Susan), vice Pres First Nat Bank, also general merchandise, Florence.



Hooten, Alfred M., (Margaret E.), retired, Frank, Roy.  
Huber, Adam E., (Margaret), carpenter, Paul H., Martha.  
Huber, Charlotte, (Wid. Peter H.)  
Hughes, Chas., (Mary), blacksmith.  
Jenkins, Wm.  
Jerman, L. W. D., (S. L.), physician.  
Johnson, Emma, (Wid. Henry Dr.)  
Keeley, Laura, Mrs., John, Roy, Moses, Myrtle, Rosie.  
Keurt, Elizabeth, (Wid. John).  
Keurt, John, (Stella), contractor.  
King, Henry, (Mary), farmer, Russell, Halleen.  
King, Richard, (Mary), engineer, Harry, Clara.  
King, Thomas, (Carrie), stone cutter, Howard, Marcella.  
Lawrence, Berthena, (Wid. Philip), Thomas J.  
Lloyd, H. M., (Mary O.), general merchandise, Elmer, Erna.  
Lloyd, Nancy C., (Wid. Wm. B.).  
Lawrence, W. M., (Rachel), painter, Hildred, Frank, Della.  
McDermott, John, (Mollie), contractor, Russell, Elmer.  
McDermott, Loraine, (Wid. Wm.)  
McKee, H. S., (physician and surgeon, ph.  
McKeighan, Rose, (Wid. Dave), Ed.  
Main, Sylvester, (Lou), foreman Big 4.  
Marlin, Cicero, (Mary), blacksmith, Jessie.  
Marlin, John, lab, Chas., Edward, Russell, Flora, Lavonna.  
Martin, Chas. W., (Pearl), lab.  
Martin, Cicero, (Mary C.), blacksmith.  
Martin, Dave, (Lizzie), quarry man, Ira, Bertie, Fairy.  
Mason, John, engineer.  
Metz, G. W., (Catherine), general merchandise, Elma, Christine, Wm.  
McKinley, Louise, Margaret, Cora.  
Meyer, Chas. F., (Margaret), teamster, Pauline, Christine, Chas.,  
Beatrice.  
Meyer, John A., (Bridget), trustee, John E., Wm. A., James H., Luretta,  
Leonella, Luellen.  
Minning, V. H., cigars, tobacco and confectionaries.  
Morton, Charlotte, (Wid. Henry), Lillian.  
Morton, John, (Pearl), teamster.  
Morton, Nick, (Emma), quarry man.  
Moulton, Edw., (Jessie), teacher, Ruth.  
Neimeyer, Ed, (Ruth), rural mail carrier.  
Osborn, Albert I., (Florence), farmer, Anna.  
Price, Clint, (Henrietta), farmer, Mary, Naomi.  
Puttmann, John J., (Hester E.), Pres First Nat Bank, also hardware,  
implements, building material, buggies, hay, feed, also stone quar-  
ries, Elva, Leona, Clara.  
Ray, Cassie, (Wid. Geo.)  
Schuh, Peter P., wines, liquors and cigars.  
Snedaker, Daisy, Riley.  
Snedaker, John, wood turner.  
Snedaker, John W., (Anna), carpenter, Carl.  
Snedaker, W. C., (M. C.), lab.  
Spilman, E. H., (Laura), cashier the First Nat Bank.  
Starks, Elbert F., (Mary A.), jewelry, musical merchandise, china ware,  
books, etc, Jennie, Sanford.  
Starks, Florence.  
Starks, Randolph, (Rose), retired, Cora.



Starks, Rebecca, (Wid. Henry), Kate.  
Starks, Wm. H., (Jeanette), plumber.  
Suding, August, (Catherine), assessor, Pauline, Veronico.  
Thomas, Allen M., (Martha), stone cutter, Rolland, Muriel.  
Thomas, Dave, (Sarah), teamster, Mort.  
Travis, Geo., (Belle), farmer, Esther.  
Thomas, Wm., (Elisa), telegraph operator.  
Walker, C. H., (Mary), R R, Edna.  
Williams, C. B., (Mary), tel oper.  
Wintrow, Bert, (Sallie), quarry man.  
Wintrow, Gus, (Melcena), teamster.  
Wolfe, Fred, (Tillie), meat market, Harold.  
Wolfe, Henry, (Eva B.), barber and shoe maker, Morris, Willis,  
Kenneth.  
Woods, Neal, (Mary), stone cutter, Ora.  
Woods, Wm. (Cleo), quarry man.  
Wright, Wm., (Elizabeth).  
Yale, Ethel, teacher.  
Unkle, Julia.

\* \* \* \*--DECATUR COUNTY GAZETTEER

#### THE LAST MEETING

The dinner meeting February 1, again held at the Presbyterian church, with the largest attendance ever, 170 members and guests present, was its usual success, evident of the growing interest in the Decatur County Historical Society. Prof. Herbert F. Koch of Cincinnati, who has his own radio program, broadcasting weekly from WLW-R on subjects of local historical significance, had a captive audience--captive in the sense that he held his listeners to the very last. His theme had to do with the pattern of migration to this area, and the reasons for it. Confronted by the wilderness, the hostility of the Indian, wild animals and the natural obstacles of a primitive country, Prof. Koch made it clear that our ancestors rose above all of this to become the hardy pioneers of this great Middle West--that here is our heritage....President Jarrard presided with his usual wit and charm....The dinner served by Circle Three of the church was far above par and served nicely with their usual dispatch, by these young mothers. The table decorations were in good taste and professionally done.....The toy show was an added feature that caused the members to linger on....The report of the auditing committee showed that the organization was in good condition financially--not well off but solvent. New officers as noted elsewhere in the BULLETIN were nominated and elected to serve in 1964. We look forward to a good year Mr. President-elect. Best wishes Mr. Garner!



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Volume 1 - No. 22

Greensburg, Indiana

September 30, 1964

EARLY BIRDS

Once more it is time for the EARLY BIRDS. Strangely enough these come in the fall. They are members who pay their 1965 membership fee early and in advance. These nice birds do not demand that the secretary spend her time plus four to eight cents postage to get them back in the fold. Rare birds - these EARLY BIRDS!

\* \* \* \*

DISADVANTAGES OF THE GRADED SYSTEM IN OUR INTERIOR TOWNSHIPS VERY TRIFLING-

The only disadvantage of any moment to be apprehended in introducing the graded system into all our townships, arises from the distance, which pupils from the frontiers of the townships must travel, in order to reach the central High School... In summer and in autumn the distance is no objection. The walk of two or three miles would injure no one, not even the delicate female. It would, in most cases, prove an advantage to the physical energy and mental acuteness of the scholars.....In winter the females might find the walking inconvenient. But among our rural population there is no want of means of conveyance. In every farm yard there is a plenty of horses, and mules, to carry all the children to school. Should the farmer have to harness up his team, and take his children three miles to school, every morning, and every evening to bring them home, he would do it at much less expense, than he would incur by sending them to a private school.

-First Annual Report-Supt. Public Instruction for the State of Indiana-December 1852

OCCASION: Fall Field Trip  
DATE: Sunday afternoon  
October 18, 1964  
TIME: 2 P. M. - EST  
PLACE: St. Omer School House  
St. Omer, Indiana

The annual fall field trip will start from the St. Omer "school-house" which incidentally is the present home of our co-chairman Mr. and Mrs. E. V. Rutherford. Under their guidance the group will visit points of historical interest in and around St. Paul, St. Omer and Star Church. Both Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford are natives of Adams township and to say that they are well qualified to tell the story, is an understatement. We can look forward to a very pleasant afternoon. The usual coffee and doughnuts as a traditional part of the social hour to follow, will be served by the Ladies of Star Church. There will also be a display at the church, Mr. Joe Shelhorn and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dale Brown cooperating.

BRING AS MANY GUESTS AS YOU LIKE!  
EVERYBODY IS WELCOME!

NO TRANSPORTATION!

No problem at all. Call President Mr. Loren Garner at 663-4970 and a way will be provided.

\* \* \* \*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Miss Catherine Donnell-Brooklyn,  
N. Y.  
Miss Minerva Donnell-Roswell, N.  
Mexico  
Mrs. Stephen Gaynor-New York, N.Y.  
Mr. Ewing Arnold  
Mrs. Ewing Arnold 468



Reminiscences of the late "Uncle John" Shelhorn as told by himself for the last time in September, 1912 to Chas. C. Roberts.

John and Lydia Shelhorn, parents of Uncle John Shelhorn came from New Jersey in 1818, stopped at Brookville (Ind.) until the land sale in Indiana in 1820. They bought seventeen 80-acre tracts in Rush and Decatur Counties. They sold part of the land and built the old flour mill that formerly stood at Downeyville. The mill was owned by Flynn & White and afterwards by Mr. Banta. The mill has been gone a number of years and is no longer a landmark.

Uncle John was three years old when his father died. In looks he, (the father), resembled Uncle Lewis Shelhorn, but in form was built like Uncle John. There were no photographs in those days.

Eight years later his mother died of hemorrhage of the lungs. Both parents died young. When his parents first came to this country they built a double house out of walnut logs on the farm now owned by John Shelhorn (in 1963 - Joe Shelhorn). The old shop that stood at the brow of the hill for so many years was an attachment to this house and it was in this part Uncle John was born. There was no floor in the main part of the building until Uncle John was 12 years old. The children slept upstairs and could stick their fingers out through the cracks between the logs.

There were no saw mills to make boards. They made ash slabs four inches thick and they were called puncheon and laid these for floors. Doors were made of the same material. They had no nails to fasten the shingles on the house but cut long poles to lay on top of the shingles to hold them down. They made hinges out of wood and had wooden latches with a string attachment on the outside to raise the latch. At night the string could be drawn inside and no one could enter. It is said from this custom originated the word "Hoosier," a contraction of the words "who's there," for often that question would be asked before the door would be opened. Thus Indiana in the early days got the name of "Hoosier State."

Early families owned from 5 to 20 acres of land, cows ran in the woods and lived on pea vines (they looked something like morning-glory vines). They used cow bells, each cow had a different bell so they could distinguish the different tones and hunt their cows. There was no grass for them to eat. In the evening when they would go after the cows they would start one hour by the sun and leave some one at home to blow a horn for fear the darkness would come on and they would get lost in the woods. Wild onions eaten by the cows sometimes spoiled the milk. The horns were blown at dinner-time to call the men from their work in the fields.

The hogs were turned loose in the woods and ate beechnuts and acorns. To prevent the meat from being so oily and dripping, because of the nut diet, some people fed the hogs about six weeks before butchering.

The hogs lived wild and learned to protect themselves from wild beasts. The old hogs had long tusks and the wolves could not manage them. The sheep were most helpless and were always taken first. The wolves were killed off in a few years. The deer lasted several years and there were wild turkeys.



Brooms were made from hickory trees splintered down to scrub with. They sold for 20¢ apiece. They churned with dasher churns. Coopers was the name of the workers who went from house to house and made shingles, tubs, buckets, and churns from the timber in the woods.

When Uncle John was eight years old he started to school. His teacher's name was "Taylor," he could scarcely write but knew his letters. Abraham Plue was one of his best teachers, but he said he learned more from Henry Doggett than from any of his teachers. Mr. Doggett could spell, read, and write. When he was 16 years old he studied arithmetic, geography, and grammar and quit going to school when he was 18. Each scholar had his own book and recited alone. They spelled for headmarks twice a day.

Uncle John said, "They never put me to work on the farm until I was ten years old. Lewis and I went out to hoe corn, and every time I would stop and look across the field, I would think when I get over there a little farther it will not be so bad." He said that he never forgot the first day's work and all through life like the rest of us he would look forward and think it will be better a little farther on.

When his father died there were ten acres cleared on the farm. Samuel, the elder brother, was fourteen, and could do the chores and go to the mill.

He raised his first crop of corn for himself when he was twenty-two years old. That year he fed eighty head of hogs, shipped them part way to Cincinnati and drove them the rest of the way. Humphrey Stevens shipped his hogs at the same time. He hired his hogs killed and sold them for \$300 net. He said the only time in his life that he bought whisky for men was at this time when according to the custom of the times, the butchers demanded it, he would not buy it for himself but gave them 25¢ to buy one gallon.

When they returned home they took a boat to Madison, Indiana, then the railroad to Shelbyville, and from there walked home. He said that year he cleared four hundred dollars and made this remark "If I always do that well I will be satisfied."

His grandmother was a Quaker and married outside the Quaker church. They tried to make her say she was "sorry" and because she would not she was turned out of the church. The Quakers at that time had no preachers but whoever felt like he was moved by the spirit would get up and talk. They did not believe in laziness or pauperism. When two young people got married, the people would buy them a little house and if they did not work and support themselves they were excluded from the church.

Uncle John loved the Quaker church better than any other. There being no church in his community in 1870, he was instrumental in building the New Little Flatrock Baptist Church. He gave one summer's work, five hundred dollars and collected the balance of the money for the erection of the building and superintended the work. He could leave no better memorial.

Hannah Brown



## ISRAEL JEWETT'S FIRST TELEPHONE

A voice came on the line cautioning them to watch their language. The VOICE was that of Samantha Jewett. The "party of the first part" was at the Jewett homestead about a quarter of a mile north of St. Omer, and the "party of the second part" was at the St. Omer general store operated by Jewetts. The farmers had gathered to loaf awhile and engage in a little spit-and-whittle session. When the language heard in Mrs. Jewett's kitchen became disturbing to her, she merely spoke into the cigar box on the kitchen wall, and a wire carried her words of warning to the store, being heard by all present.

Israel Jewett, in the early 1860's had among other creative things, perfected something of a phenomenon in the world of communications. People all over the country were searching for the right technique, whereby the human voice could be in communication with voices at other locations. All kinds of ideas were projected.

It was during an informal visit with a caller that he was sitting on the stone step at his front door, holding the brim of his stiff-katy hat in his left hand. He felt the vibrations in the hat when he spoke--and there was born the idea of a telephone. Mr. Jewett's creation was an open connection, the transmitter picking up any noise or voice in its range, and carried it by wire to the receiver at the other end of the line. Thus his first telephone was a sort of "hear-all---tell-all" system, but it raised the eyebrows of every observer.

An octogenerian living in Seattle, Washington, wrote recently, "I sure do remember Israel Jewett. Even listened to a woman sing over the phone that he had from his place to where she lived (and I was only a little kid then), but could hear her voice as plain as though she was right in the room. How far her place was from where I was, I don't know."

Approximately in 1902 or 1903 he extended his telephone service to the OLD MORVEN neighborhood for the consideration of \$11.00 a year. Jewett was not only the owner-manager of the company, but he was the bookkeeper and maintenance man, too. Children thrilled at the sight of his sorrel horse and work-wagon coming down the road, for that huckster-type rig with curtains on the sides that rolled up and fastened with a strap was bringing an individualist that had hundreds of unique and scholarly tales to tell, blended with wit.-----And if anyone had a cut or sore, he always gave them a free treatment of his SAMARITAN OIL.

Did Mr. Jewett have any formal education in what we would call today,--the field of electronics? No. Aside from his education in the St. Omer school, he had native ability that led him to get patents on lots of things, a few of which are: a special kind of gate, a kind of shoe polish, and a drug called SAMARITAN OIL. The Jewetts were educated by their own reading. Always in their household there were books that challenged the intellect of the most eager mind. When son Earl was in medical college, father Israel and grandfather Hiram really put him through his paces, for they would test his wits to the limit when he came home for vacations.....Along with the able assistance of "drug-gist" father Hiram Jewett, the SAMARITAN OIL was formulated into an



effective medication for burns, etc., and their shelf was never without it-----neither was the work-wagon.

The Jewetts were among the first settlers of Adams township, locating near the present site of Downeyville, where David Jewett built a stone house and acquired a large tract of land through the land grant office at Brookville. He built the old Picayune mills and in the early days was a distiller of whisky, and also operated a tannery. He built the first saw-mill on Flat Rock River and also the first grist-mill. Hiram, Israel's father operated the store in St. Omer for a number of years, and the farm north of there where he built the present brick house. Along with the 396 acre farm,--also a land grant, he operated at the homestead site a first-rate drug store, where he also served as the community dentist. For a number of years he was the trustee of Adams township.

From this location the cigar box telephone grew into the JEWETT TELEPHONE COMPANY which was one of the best public utilities in these parts. The lines were connected to all points in Rush, Decatur, and Shelby Counties. Although it was the early bitter opinion that Alexander Graham Bell received the coveted patent for the telephone, which rightfully belonged to Jewett, it was the later knowledge of the family that Mr. Bell's telephone was entirely different, and they bowed to the inevitable. Israel Jewett even in retirement, maintained a warm community interest, and a keen progressive attitude.

BUT NOW WE HAVE REGRETS. As so many others have said, "If only our foresight was as keen as our hindsight, things would be different." What would have been priceless keepsakes were thoughtlessly thrown away or given to a passing junk man. Thus the first telephone equipment in these parts,--the old, old apothecary jars,--mortar and pestles, and the old dentist chair that had cluttered the place for so long (they thought) were disposed of. The final regret is that a story is lost. The family had among the old patent records, the land grant deeds, and rare books, a prized copy of the full page article that told the story of Israel Jewett's telephone. The CINCINNATI ENQUIRER carried this front page feature some one or two years before or after 1863. The article was loaned to the Indianapolis Telephone Company for reprint. It was carefully returned to the granddaughter, Justine Jewett Wesseling, but now to her sorrow (and mine) it cannot be found. Is there within the scope of my pen any person who can provide us with a copy of this article? If so, this poor scribe would enjoy the documented "printers ink" along with her feeble, but determined effort to preserve something of Israel Jewett's telephone--the story which accompanied her growing up.

Marceil L. Freeland

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Reminiscences of Early Shelby County (Cont'd)  
J. R. French

Now I will come back into Shelby county. After the mill was built and a town was started, and a store in the town, and the Michigan road cut out the people thought they were highly favored and some of them that had money began to enjoy life after the manner of those days. About this time, in 1830, there were a great many large teams put on the road to haul goods to Indianapolis, as there was no other way to get the goods from Cincinnati to Indianapolis except to haul



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then on wagons, and it took a team thirty days to make the trip when the roads were bad, and they were nearly always bad. So much teaming and driving hogs on roads did it. In 1832 a stage was put on the Michigan road between Cincinnati and Indianapolis, and they established stands from ten to fifteen miles apart where the horses were changed. Father kept then, and the next stand was at Hankins, a little this side of Brandywine. It took two days to drive from Cincinnati to Indianapolis. The stage was the only public conveyance and travelers ate breakfast at our house one day and dinner the next. They drove from Cincinnati to Napoleon one day and the next day to Indianapolis. They ate breakfast going west and dinner going east. The stage held nine persons, and sometimes it would be full and sometimes empty, but we had to have the table set for nine which made it a very uncertain business. Father kept the horses and boarded the drivers for twelve dollars a month. Hotels began to spring up between us and Shelbyville. There was Curmin's, then Worland, Lowdon, Zell, Thompson and Midkiff. The traveling was so great that we hardly ever ate a meal alone and father's charges were so small compared with now. Nearly all the travel was on horseback, and it was a common thing for a half dozen or more to ride up spattered all over with mud, and father would take them in, have them take off their leggings and overcoats and us boys would take off the saddles and ride the horses to the creek nearby and wash them off and put them in the stable and give them hay. Then after supper the men would go with us to the stable and order the kind of grain they wanted them fed, and then they would go back to the house and we would clean their horses and bed them. When we got back to the house father gave them slippers to put on and their boots were to clean and blacken. In the morning when they came down stairs they would find their boots nicely blackened and they ate breakfast. We would clean their overcoats and have their horses out and saddled and then father would charge them thirty-seven and a half cents. Afterward he raised the price to one-half dollar and we thought it was high. But we produced everything except some of the groceries. We raised our bread and all of our meat except mackerel. We made our sugar and molasses. We bought coffee by the sack and tea by the chest.

In 1825 when there was no whiskey made here and people thought it as necessary as bread, my father decided to make it. He went back to Lebanon, where a man owed him a debt. All he could get from him was a set of copper stills. My father brought it out and set it up and stilled for three years, for he thought he could not keep a hotel without whiskey. This was the first still house in the county and it would have been a good thing if it had been the last. The first thing that set father to thinking about it was men bringing meal to the still house to trade for whiskey, when he knew their children needed it for bread. He thought it was wrong to sell it, but he thought he could not keep a hotel without whiskey, so he made three barrels and put it in the cellar and shut down the still house. In those days the table was never set without the whiskey bottle on it and the man that would not drink was considered a crank and if a neighbor came in and the bottle was not offered to him he took it as an insult. Every morning we children must walk up and take some tanzy bitters.

Father sold his still to John Haymond, in Middletown, who stilled for a while, I don't know how long. The first person that refused to drink was the Presbyterian preacher. My mother was a Presbyterian and



the preachers would stop with us and preach at our house. My father and mother were the first to embrace the temperance cause and when they did they cut it all out and did not keep it in and about the house. My father was the first man to try to get in a harvest without whiskey. Wheat was then cut with a sickle and the wages was 50 cents a day. Father said he was going to pay 62-1/2 cents a day. His neighbors told him that he could not get help without whiskey, but he told them that he would cut what he could himself and then he would "hog" the rest. He had no trouble for that extra 12-1/2 cents "looked good" and he had more hands than needed. Father and mother were the leaders of the temperance movement in our neighborhood if not in the entire county and they instilled it into their sons so they were all temperance men.

We will now come back to the stage and mail business. The mail was carried on horse back until the stage was started. Joseph Common was the postmaster at Middletown. The carrier would drive up to the office with the stage and wait there until the postmaster would take the mail in and look over it all, taking out what belonged to his place, then the stage would drive on to the next office. The postage on a letter was 12-1/4 cents, paid when you received your letter. There were no stamps on letters, there was no change like there is now, five and ten cents. It was six and one-fourth, twelve and a half, eighteen and three-fourths, twenty-five, thirty-one and one-fourth, thirty-seven and a half, forty-three and three-fourths, and fifty cents, but it was not long after ten cent pieces came into circulation until postage came down to ten cents and later down to five. If paid in advance, three, and then down to two cents as it is now. This brings us to about 1830. At that time there was not a church in this part of Shelby county. Preaching was at private homes. The Presbyterians built a church in St. Omer in 1833, and about 1840 the Baptists built one at Middletown and soon after the Methodists built one at St. Omer. The "Hard Shell" Baptists built one just below St. Paul but when the railroad ran through in '53 it made some change. In 1832 there was not a railroad in the state and the state was talking of building one from Lawrenceburg to Indianapolis and did survey the route. The line ran a little north of Middletown. Next time I will tell you about the first railroad in the state or west of the Alleghany mountains.

In 1832 by the authority of the State, John Walker built a mile and a quarter of railroad, the first west of the Alleghany mountains, if not the first in the United States. It started opposite the distillery and went east to Midkiff's tavern. There is no mark of the tavern now, except some locust trees where the house stood, a little more than a hundred yards west of where the Cynthiana road crosses into the Michigan road. In your article about Sidney Robertson you say this road was built in 1834, which is a mistake. I remember it so well. The people came from quite a distance from over the State and some stayed over night with us on July 3. Father went out there on July 4 to ride on this wonderful railroad. A great many people's idea of a railroad was that the rails lay across the road in some mud hole. This road did not have a piece of iron about it. They cut down straight trees and laid them side by side, cutting notches in them to put the ties. They then drove a wedge in beside the tie and cut square notches in them to put the ties. They then drove a wedge in beside the tie and cut square notches in the ties to put square scantlings. They drove a



wedge beside the rails and then cut away the center of the tie to make a path for the horse. The car would carry forty persons and they charged 25 cents to ride out to Midkiff's and back. They would change horses every trip and as soon as forty got out forty more were ready to take their places. It was kept up all day on the Fourth of July, 1832, and some longer, or as long as it would pay. The State paid John Walker to build the road and he got the toll on the road extra. This was seventy-five years ago and very few that were there then are here now. There are still some marks of that road to be seen, and when I think of it I don't know of but one person near to Middletown except myself who was in this end of Shelby county at that time. That person is Margaret Haymond. She is living in Waldron, but was living in Middletown at that time. She is a daughter of Joseph Cummins, the oldest of the family, and the only one living. I might here make some mention of our first school--it was in Middletown. They built a hewed log school house and had no glass in the windows. This house stood on the bluff of Conn's creek and was a little past two years old when I went to school, 79 years ago. George Vanaman was the first school teacher. The next was John Portlock and after him his brother, Moses Portlock. The next was John Cartmel, who was the teacher for some years, and a good one. He bantered several schools to spell against his school. He bantered Jones, who was teaching one and a half miles south of Waldron, another was Moses Portlock, who was teaching at St. Omer, and Wesley Rucker, a little south of Blue Ridge. This was in 1835, when I was ten years old. We did nothing but spell for some time before we met to spell. Jones brought his school to Middletown and we spelled all day. Bird McNeeley and I were not turned down all day. Later we met at old "Uncle John" Haymond's. We did not take any other book to school than the spelling book until we were twelve years old. We then began to write. When our school and the one up toward Blue Ridge met it was a bad day and father would not let me go, but when we met Portlock they met at James Finley's on the Michigan road, just over the county line in Decatur county. It was nice weather and we met in the field and had martial music. Portlock, to make sure, got some of the best spellers in the Jones school and from a school up near Moscow, but we beat them. After Cartmel we had Wm. Jones. He was the last one I went to. He was teaching at the cross roads, where now is the town of Waldron. I don't remember any that were in those spelling contests, all gone, and I am left here yet.

We will now come back a few years and you will permit me to refer to my parents as they were far ahead of anything financially. As I have said before, they had money when they came here, and father was an industrious man always at work and never wasting anything in dissipation. He always had money to buy anything that he or mother had need of. So, years before any person would have thought of a cook stove, father brought one home. There was not another one this side of Greensburg or Shelbyville. To say that mother was proud of her stove does not tell it. She had a bake oven and a reflector was fine for baking biscuits, but when that cook stove came in it was the wonder of the neighborhood. Women would come miles to see it. Mother took some pride in telling them how to cook with it and to them it was a wonder. This was in 1833 or 1834. There were four boys and we kept four fires. Each boy had a fire to prepare wood for, but when this stove came each boy wanted to prepare the wood for it. No heavy wood for it like the fire place but it was not long until anyone could have the job, we had to split the wood so fine. About this time the Presbyterians built a



church and started a Sunday school in St. Omer and father and mother went to church on horseback, but one day father went to Greensburg and came home riding in a fine, two-seated carriage for which he paid two hundred dollars. At that time there was not a person between Greensburg and Shelbyville that owned a carriage and there was not one for several years. I was married in 1845 and brought my bride home in the carriage and I do not know another carriage in our neighborhood or anywhere near.

The first steam railroad in the State was built between Madison and Indianapolis in July, 1847. It was finished to Edinburg and I rode on horseback to Edinburg, and got on the train and rode to Madison and back. Some time that year it was finished to Indianapolis. The iron was flat bar and they made very slow time. In 1850 I rode up from Madison to Edinburg and on up to Shelbyville. The road extended on up to Rushville and Cambridge City. About the same time they built a road from Columbus to Shelbyville and on to Knightstown, and afterward the road from Shelbyville to Edinburg was dropped. The road from Shelbyville to Knightstown was abandoned and the Columbus end of the other were connected and are now part of the Pennsylvania system. In '53 the Big Four ran through the county on to Indianapolis. The stage then stopped and we had some way to get away beside private conveyance. The first place I saw a passenger train was on the Michigan Central road near Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1846.

In the first settling of Shelby county there were no cemeteries. Many farms have dead buried on them. When my father died in 1843 a cemetery was started in St. Omer.

I will now compare some prices of farm products years ago with the present prices. On the 2d day of June, 1843 was the administrator's sale of my father. The things were sold on a year's credit. We sold 400 bushels of corn in fifty bushel lots at from eleven and a half to twelve and a half cents; 300 bushels of oats at nine cents; three stacks of hay, two and a half tons in a stack, for \$4 per stack; seven cows from \$4 to \$7, four three year old steers at \$17.37-1/2, for the four.

While I am talking of prices of farm products and considering the price of eggs now and what they were sixty-five years ago, the present generation will hardly believe me when I tell them that I have seen eggs piled up in the stores at two cents a dozen and the merchants had to barrel them up packed in oats and have them hauled to Cincinnati and get three cents for them.

Speaking of merchants, Joseph Cummins was our first merchant at Middletown. Next after him was David Favett; then came George Wooden, and then James Curtis, who is still living on his farm one mile south of Waldron. About this time the railroad passed through and Waldron started up and the most of the business went to Waldron. This was in 1853. The farm that Curtis now lives on was entered by Henry Misner and he sold it to William Stears and he to James Curtis about fifty-five years ago. Mr. Curtis is getting along in years, one of the oldest in that neighborhood. There were old Mr. Knight, Mr. Newton, Mr. Stroup, Wilson Baxter, Short Haymond, Powell Chapman, Moore Chrisler, French Haymond, Monroe Finley, Creek Huffnan, Wycoff Beedle, Bartley Mooney, Whiteacre, Vanpelt Tindall, all gone except Curtis and myself.



But I will now leave this subject and take up the doctors. If there is any man in this county that is blessed with doctors in the family I am that man. I had one brother, two sons-in-law, four nephews and one grandson that are doctors, and still I live. The first doctor we had in Middletown was Dr. Brown, and then came Dr. Griffin, the man that laid out the town of St. Omer. The prevailing disease then was ague or chills and fever, and the first thing the doctor did was to feel your pulse, look at your tongue and look wise, then call for the broom and then tell you to take hold of the broom handle and hold out your arm, while he would draw about a quart of blood out of your arm and then he would give you a dose of calomel and put a fly blister on you, somewhere. It did not make much difference where and when it had drawn sufficient to make a bad sore, you must take off and put on some kind of poultice to draw all the vitality out of you, and you were not allowed to have a drop of water or a bite of anything to eat, and if you did not die in a week he would conclude that you were worth saving and let you get well. After Dr. Brown left Middletown, Dr. Robbins came there and he was our doctor. While he was our doctor I had an attack of sore throat and he came and put a fly blister on my throat and as soon as it blistered he tore the skin off and put the plaster back on and when it had blistered the second time, tore off the blister and put the plaster on the third time, and the last time he put a plaster on the back of my neck, and still my head stayed on and I got well in spite of him. My honest opinion is that the doctor killed more people those days than they cured. I think there were many persons that died for want of water. I was personally acquainted with one case where they would not let the patient have any water and one Sunday some of his young friends called to see him, and a pitcher of water was brought in, and they thought he was going to die, and soon they all got up and went out to dinner. He got up and took the pitcher and drank all he wanted, and when they came in and found what he had done they sent for the doctor and when he arrived he was so much better that all were surprised and he got well in spite of the doctor. But doctors have more sense now. Where is the doctor that will bleed a patient now, or blister them, or refuse to let them have water to drink or food to eat. I have been told by doctors that there was no bigger humbug than the practice of medicine, and yet when we get sick we send for the doctor. It is the force of education. If things change as much in the next sixty years as they have in the last sixty years doctors will go out of practice. But I will stop for fear of the displeasure of the doctors.

I have spoken about the Presbyterians starting a Sunday school at St. Omer, and if you will bear with me I will give you some of my own experiences in Sunday school. I was eight years old when the school started, and I lived nearly three miles away. I never missed a day for eight years, winter or summer. My teacher was David Paramour, an elder, in the Presbyterian church at St. Omer. The school was re-organized every spring, but I remained in his class so that when the school had been going eight years, he said to me, "I know that you can teach a class and I want you to have a class of boys here next Sunday. Select them yourself." I was then sixteen years old, and while it was very embarrassing to me, I was taught to obey my superiors. So on the next Sunday I had my boys there--only four--and I taught them the best I could for some time. I then took a class of girls, and as I found them easier to teach, I continued to teach the young ladies



class for over fifty years. I now have a class of old folks. I have spent over seventy years of my life in the Sunday school, but I don't think I shall spend many more. I sometimes think I will quit, but when Sunday comes, I feel like I ought to be there. I want to tell one other thing in regard to my younger days, and you will pardon me for referring to myself and what I have done. Father was very strict with us boys (there were four of us). We were never allowed to go to town on Saturday afternoon like other boys, but it was work from Monday morning to Saturday night. We had corn enough that it took us the whole week to plow it over--we two older boys plowing and the two younger boys hoeing and uncovering.

We had heard that Mr. Paramour was going to have singing school at the Presbyterian church on Saturday afternoon and we worked extra hard to get our corn plowed over by noon on Saturday and while we were eating dinner we said to father that Mr. Paramour was going to have singing school that evening and we wanted to go. My brother was about seventeen and I about fourteen. Father said, "no" and told us to go to plowing again after we were through eating our dinner. He got up and took the two younger boys and went to work. We would have gone too but mother said, "Boys, if you want to go your clean clothes are ready." That was enough. When we had mother on our side we felt pretty safe. So we went and they sung in the "Missouri Harmony" book. We expected father would whip us Monday morning, as he would not whip on Sunday, but he didn't say a word about it and after that we went to singing school every week for three years, and I learned to sing almost everything in the book. I liked to sing in the "Missouri Harmony," but my book has been burned up and I am deprived of that pleasure. I said we went every week, but in the winter time we went on week nights, and on Saturday in the summer.

We kept a large sugar orchard--over three hundred trees--and we always began sugar making in February. There was not an idle day for us then until the corn was gathered the next fall. Father always had something to do indoors if it rained; in wool picking time we had to pick wool; during the crop season, if it was too wet to plow, we would cut brickwood; after harvest was over we would make a kiln of brick, or go into the clearing and roll logs or pick trash and burn it until it was time to sow wheat; when the corn was gathered we would start to school, and during the week father with the horses would tramp out the wheat or oats.

The story of how all the creeks in Shelby county received their names would be a very interesting one. Perhaps no living person knows how most of them were named. My father claims to have named Deer Creek after he had seen a man kill a deer in the stream near our house. He began calling it that name and others took up the name. Mill Creek is said to have been named by Jonathan Paul, who built the first mill on the creek.

"Jiminy" creek, which bears that mild oath handed down from ancient Castor and Pollux is said to have been given its name by Benjamin Love, who formerly lived in Shelbyville. He built a cabin along the stream and lived there for many years. One day his rig was mired down into the stream. It was at this time that Mr. Love is said to have given vent to his aggravation by uttering that mild "cuss-word" "Jiminy."



After that he persisted in calling it that name and people followed his lead.

It might be interesting to hear about the manner in which neighbors visited back and forth in earlier days. Several families would gather together and go to a neighbor's in a body. Usually it was after midnight when they would see fit to start home again. The women found the least time to visit, for by the time they had the work through it was time to go home. That accounts for some of the late stays.

In 1833 the squirrels were so plentiful in this part of Shelby county that people found it necessary to devise means of riding them out, in contrast to the means now employed to preserve the species. In the spring of the year 1833 about thirty men formed themselves into two companies to carry on a contest which was purposed incidentally to rid the country about of varmints. Prizes were given for the greatest number of scalps captured at each hunt. The scalps counted as follows:

Squirrel scalp	1
Hawk Scalp	5
Rabbit Scalp	5
Quail Scalp	3

One time soon after harvest, when the companies met for a match, the woods was full of shooting. Here and there men were bringing down a squirrel or hawk. Out would come a knife and soon a scalp would be resting in the hunter's pouch. The animal's body would be thrown away. At the close of this particular match it would be no exaggeration to say two barrels of scalps were burned. The person whose scalps footed up the greatest number of points was given a prize and the side which gained the greatest number was declared the winner of the match.

The first saw mill built in Shelby County was erected by Harry Moore on Conn's creek opposite Middletown. Later another was built west of Waldron by Elijah Misner, and afterward sold to Isaac Newton. Newton had in connection a carding machine with which he turned out wooden bowls.

The first grist mill in the county was built by William Major a mile above the mouth of Conn's creek. There is not a trace of these mills left.

In 1840 mother and father went to Lebanon, O. for a visit, leaving my brother, nine years old, and myself, fifteen years old, to take care of ourselves. That was in Whig times, and indeed you would have thought so if you had been there yourself. One day there was an immense gathering in Greensburg and one was to be held in Shelbyville the next day. Sixteen Whigs who had been at the Greensburg meeting and were on their way to Shelbyville meeting stopped at our house and wanted to stay all night. They were greatly disappointed to find that we boys were alone and things were not handy to entertain them over night. Finally I told them there was plenty of horse feed in the barn and sent my brother to help them put away their horses. I told them we would do the best we could for them. I went to the chicken house and killed four plump chickens. I got up a good supper for them and also a good breakfast, using four more chickens for that meal. When the men were ready to leave they asked how much the charge would be.



When I told them it would be fifty cents each they protested that father would have charged them nothing since they were good Whigs. I told them I was running the ranch while father was away and they paid me.

Martin Wray, who was in his prime in 1850, and widely known throughout the country as "The Whig Thunderer," made a rousing speech at Middletown during the campaign and met with an answer from a stranger that took him back somewhat. Mr. Wray spoke for more than an hour, roundly scoring the Democratic party, and daring anyone in the audience to answer his arguments. He, of course, did not believe any person present would volunteer. But back near the outer edge of the crowd which gathered about the great box upon which he was hoisted, two strangers had listened in silence.

"Who in this crowd will dare to answer me?" shouted Wray.

"I will," shouted a man on horseback. He climbed off his horse, left it with his companion and elbowed his way through the crowd. He mounted the stand after introducing himself to Mr. Wray, and before he had talked long he had put the former speaker to shame with his eloquence. Wray slipped off the edge of the box where he had been sitting and slunk away into the crowd. It was a standing joke in connection with his name for a long time. The man proved to be George H. Dunn, of Lawrenceburg, then one of the "big guns" of Indiana Democracy. He was a stranger to everyone present.

I remember well an incident in the life of Squire Van Pelt, who died recently. On the morning of the presidential election Mr. VanPelt entertained a large company of St. Omer people and others. He had to reach beef for the company which came to eat breakfast with him. In summer it was a little bit annoyed because there were more Whigs than rats present. The tables were spread out in the yard. It of two or whether there were others beside myself who are still jure no on female. I

Then who deserve mention in connection with the earlier life prove an the eastern part of Shelby county, is Herman Avery. His first energy an a VanPelt and four children were born to the union. The family lived adjoining St. Paul, part of the town having been laid out on his land. After the death of Mrs. Avery, Mr. Avery married her widowed sister, Mrs. McClure. At the death of the second wife Avery was again married to Miss Knight, mother of the daughter of Dr. Howard. She died while the first child was very young and Avery was again married to a widow, the only child of the union died. The marriage of two pairs of sisters is rare and in some respects remarkable. Wilson Avery, a son, also married a sister of his first wife who died. He was the father of nine children, one of whom was a girl. He died before his second wife.

I don't think there are any of the second generation of the VanPelts or Avery's living now. There were the Ogdens and Majors who lived in the immediate neighborhood, none of the second generation of which are living that I know of. One may go north and find the McAhrens and Knights none nearer than the third generation of the early settlers except myself living in this section of the county. East of Waldron were the Stears, Beedles, Vanamans, Whiteacres, Wiekoffs, Huffmans,



Creeks, Mooneys and Bartleys, all of whom are gone, and I don't know of a descendent of any of them. Up near Waldron was John Haymond, who came to the county in 1827. He was the father of fourteen children, the result of two marriages. All are dead except Jane Mecals, who lives in Rush county a short distance east of Vienna Church. She is eighty-three years old.

Another family of Haymond's, who I think were cousins, lived on the Michigan Road. There was Thomas, Ahigo, Owen and William, not a trace of whom remains. They went west, taking their families with them. I might go on and name Christler, Snider, Ryland, Rucker, Love, Moore, Ormsby and others. Where are they? Where are the French's? I am the last of that family.

The early settlers of the county used to celebrate Christmas in a peculiar fashion. On Christmas Eve they would start in the neighborhood of St. Omer with the Isleys and would go to the next neighbor's house, where they would fireoff their guns and wake the family, rousing them out of bed and making them go on to the next house. One Christmas when my father had gone to Pennsylvania on business and the neighbors were approaching, my mother heard them long before they reached our house. She roused the hired man and had him build a fire. When the kitchen was filled with people she passed pie and cake around to everyone. They did not go any further, as it was nearly daylight before they left. They were given breakfast and were then prepared to have fun all day.

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#### THE LAST MEETING

On the afternoon of Sunday, August 23rd, about one hundred of which the Decatur County Historical Society again enjoyed the host Mr. and Mrs. William Parker at their country home, rightly try Moore STONY." This was the summer meeting.....To a first visit west of a most unusual and interesting spot. We came upon what min. Newton been a painting of an old English country-side. The low wt wooden cottage with overhanging eaves and tall chimneys seemed to there. Parts of the wall were almost hidden by the "spike growth from an old Osage orange hedge.....A lagoon shaped pondle tially encircled the West side of the grounds then turned to the North side of this beautiful home.....Knowing that this solid structure was salvaged from the old West School Building, I was not prepared for the professionally-laid masonry used in the building adaptation..... Mr. Parker said that none of the stone had to have further dressing or buffing. The massive fireplace reached to the low living room ceiling, using various lengths of stone to form tiers of shelves for decorative purposes.....The long stepping stone to the front entrance was the one and same approach leading to the early academic days of many of the guests.....I found myself glued to two most unusual portraits in a second room. Miss Betty Parker filled me in on their history. They were handed down from the Kemble family, relatives of the Parkers.....In 1874 the Kembles sent cabinet photographs to France for enlargement and tinting by the charcoal method. This process had no connection with "chromo" sketches made by roving artists in the early eighties. Louis Jacques Daguerre, a French painter and physicist, developed this art.....Mrs. E. A. Porter, of Westport and a



charter member of the Society, was the speaker for the occasion and made an earnest appeal for the restoration of our old cemeteries, outlining the procedure of going about it. She related to an attentive audience some of her many experiences in this endeavor. She further paid tribute to those who had, before her time, started this worthwhile project. Mrs. Porter, very aptly, closed with Shakespeare's self-composed epitaph--

"Blest be the man, that spares these stones;  
And cursed be he, that moves my bones."

Em-Em



THE BULLETIN

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Volume 1 - No. 23      Greensburg, Indiana      December 31, 1964

COMMITTEES

Arrangements

Mrs. Helen Russell

Audit

Mrs. Charles Osburn, ch.  
Stanton Guthrie

Decorations

Mrs. Charles Walls

Display

William Baumgartner, ch.  
William Parker  
Robert Woodfill

Nominations

Frank Marlin, ch.  
Mrs. Mary Rutherford  
Mrs. Paul H. Huber  
Miss Victoria Woolverton

Reservations

Mrs. Loren Garner, ch.  
Miss Gladys Aldrich

THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS 1964

President-----Loren Garner  
1st. Vice-President-Norman Billieu  
2nd. Vice-President-Willard Martin  
Corresponding Secy.----Mrs. Robert  
Dale Brown, RFD 1, St. Paul, Ind.  
Recording Secy.-----Miss Helen K.  
Bussell, 711 North East Street,  
Greensburg, Indiana  
Treasurer-----Miss Kathryn Taney

OCCASION: Sixth Annual Dinner  
Meeting and Election  
of Officers.

SPEAKER: Hon. Milford E. Anness

DATE: Saturday, January 9,  
1965, 6:30 P. M. Fast  
Time (E.S.T.)

PLACE: Presbyterian Church  
N. E. corner Public  
Square, Greensburg,  
Indiana. Entrance on  
Washington Street.

RESERVATIONS

If you have not already been con-  
tacted, please call 663-4970  
(Mrs. Garner) or 663-4621 (Miss  
Aldrich) by Wednesday, January  
6th, if you plan to attend the  
dinner. Tickets are \$1.75 each.

Our speaker, a lifelong Hoosier  
is a lawyer, historian, former  
judge and legislator. Graduating  
from Indiana University 1940 in  
journalism and government, he at-  
tained his law degree in 1954.  
He served in the South Pacific in  
1943-45. Ten years of his life  
was spent operating the family  
hardware store at Metamora.

Known best locally as our own  
State Senator 1947-55, and later  
as Judge of the Fayette Circuit  
Court, Mr. Anness is presently  
practicing law in Columbus. He  
is also the author of "SONG OF  
METAMORIS" a story of "the  
Indian's last stand against a re-  
lentless intruder."

MEMBERSHIP--Open to everyone having an interest in history and his  
heritage. The annual dues are \$1.00 each, payable in ad-  
vance. The fiscal year ends Dec. 31. Please direct all  
applications and renewals to the Recording Secretary.



EARLY BIRDS- Members can still qualify as EARLY BIRDS by paying their 1965 dues at the Dinner Meeting.

OUR GROWING LIBRARY- Indiana University through the good office of the librarian Mr. Cecil K. Byrd has given a copy of GENERAL JOHN T. WILDER- Williams to the Society. Judge Williams, formerly of the Tennessee bench, found the general a very fascinating character, covering his life from his birth in New York state to his death in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1917. The book is rare and out of print.

HUBER'S HALL- A land-mark at New Point, this two-story frame structure, combined hall, business and dwelling burned to the ground at 2:30 A. M. Sunday morning, last October 25th. Built in 1891 it was the scene for "dances, church socials, school entertainments, graduation exercises, medicine shows, religious meetings, political rallies, oyster suppers and special parties." In all of these years the building later known as the I. O. O. F. Hall contained a grocery or meat-market, or both. Why this particular story? ....Burned was the EDITOR'S birth-place built for his advent by his grandfather.

THE DISPLAY- Again a display is to be a feature of the Dinner Meeting. With the members cooperating, it is planned to show early pictures of them, for your identification. The pictures should be of individuals only, from babies to early childhood. Bring your picture or better still leave it with a member of the committee prior to the meeting.

THE LAST MEETING- By actual count one hundred six good members of the Society descended on the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. V. Rutherford at St. Omer for the annual fall field trip. We say "descended" because at the appointed hour the fall rains set in (after a lapse of several months) and there was no alternative for our hosts, but like the hospitable folks they are- it was "COME IN OUT OF THE RAIN!" Their home was fairly bursting at the seams and had it been fair weather the house wouldn't have held them. This correspondent unable to gain the upper stair, is at a loss to report accurately on Mr. Rutherford's presentation of his subject- a description of the points of interest to be visited- but suffice it to say, that it was very well done, for everyone listened intently. Following this briefing the members and guests loaded in their cars and took off for St. Paul. The route took us past the John Paul home, the stone bridge, Germantown, the present stone quarry, the Catholic church and down-town St. Paul. From there by way of St. Omer again and the Brookville road, we went to Star Church for the social hour. Here the ladies of the church served the usual coffee and doughnuts. For an added touch, a display of family heirlooms afforded conversation pieces for those attending. In spite of the rain, which persisted, everyone had a very enjoyable afternoon.



## RAILROADS - STEAM AND ELECTRIC IN INDIANA

Indiana is a great State. It is not a great State in extent of territory when compared with other States of the Union. But commercially, socially, educationally, religiously, politically, and generally it is the greatest small State that Uncle Sam can boast of within his great domain.

The railroads which lie within her borders have been the principal factor in shaping the destiny and building up the natural resources of the Hoosier State. But before considering the question of the railroads of our own State, let us for a moment look into a little history in connection with the inception of railroads. Let us for a moment stop and look at the great struggles which went on in the minds of inventors and sleepless, restless, and tireless mechanics, in order to perfect the present railroad systems which we so much enjoy at this time in this State and in our Sister States when we visit at a distance.

Some way or other there is a disposition for people of the present generation to look upon the magnificent and luxurious railroad train in a common place, matter of fact way, as though it had always existed.

We use the train and ride upon it with as much indifference as our own little children use the telephone, which now so commonly hangs upon the walls of every dwelling or business house. Let us now stop for a moment in this hour of lightning progress and read a line of very, very recent history in reference to the construction of railroads and see what kind of a cocoon was woven about the chrysalis from which was hatched, through a rapid evolution the modern express train.

I say recent history, and really it is recent when thinking and contemplating the stupendous amount of work that it has taken to bring in to existence the modern railways and their equipments and to bring them to their present high state of excellence and perfection.

The origin of the idea which led ultimately to the building of these now vast railroad systems, was the building of a wooden track to carry coal from some of the coal mines in England. These wooden beams or rails were laid parallel in such a manner that coal carts and wagons would run in grooves so as not to slip to one side, and in this way very much larger loads of coal could be drawn by horse power than over the ordinary wagon roads. These new thoroughfares, called tramways, were made across fields, the owners of the land receiving certain rents for the right of way.

This class of rude tramways or railroads were pretty generally used in all large mining districts as early as 1775. Although these kinds of railroads were in existence, they did not attract attention as being suitable for general traffic. The success of canals not only attracted the public mind in that direction but raised up a powerful canal interest, which viewed the progress of railroads with extreme jealousy and ill will. Indeed I think, with as much ill will as is exhibited by the gentleman who tries to drive a flea bitten pony past a raging automobile which comes down the pike in this present generation, with a heedless driver at the throttle.



The use of cast iron rails led to an improved method of traction. Instead of employing a single large wagon, the plan of linking together a series of small wagons, was adopted - the germ of the modern train.

The next improvement consisted in putting flanges on the wheels instead of the rails, by which great facility of traffic was afforded. The power of locomotion still continued to be executed by horses; but as the railway system seemed to possess immense capabilities of expansion many minds and mechanics labored in devising schemes to substitute steam apparatus.

The invention of the locomotive, like that of railways was the work of successive geniuses and deep thinking inventors. Watt had shown the practability of stationary steam engines; what was now wanted was an engine that would travel by its own internal impulse. The honor of inventing a self acting steam carriage is allowed to be due to Richard Trevethick, a clever but eccentric engineer. In 1802 he took out a patent for a steam carriage, and this novel machine he exhibited to large crowds of admiring spectators on a piece of ground near London, England. However the Encyclopedia Britannica, from which I am now copying does not state whether Mr. Trevethick called his steam carriage an automobile or not, neither does it state whether he used rubber or iron ties, nor whether or not he had any trouble with the sparker or other vital points connected with the inwards of this novel self-propelling carriage. It does state however that the steam carriages were prohibited from being used on the public highways at this time on account of scaring horses and that for this reason the manufacturers were compelled to abandon the making of steam carriages.

However Mr. Trevethick soon afterwards adapted his steam carriage for the drawing of wagons on railways a duty which it successfully executed on a railway in England in 1804. This was the first locomotive: but it was far from perfect. It drew only ten tons of bar iron at the rate of five miles an hour. Mr. Trevethick did not remain in England to improve his invention nor did the moderate achievements of his machine immediately induce others to make any distinct advance on his ingenious contrivance. For this lethargy there were various causes; but the principal cause consisted in the universal belief among engineers that the locomotive could not be expected to gain great speed, to ascend a moderate hill, or to draw a heavy load unless the wheels were provided with a cog rim to work on a corresponding rack along the rails.

Numerous schemes were made the subject of patents to overcome this imaginary difficulty. Finally in 1811 it was demonstrated by one of the friends of Mr. Trevethick that a locomotive running with smooth wheels on a smooth track, by mere weight and friction could draw a heavy load up a moderate incline. However, rapidity and swiftness was now the great desideratum, and it was attained by using a very simple contrivance - to-wit - that of sending the waste steam up the chimney so as to cause a powerful draft in the fire; a rapid generation of steam was the consequence, and by this appliance, the machine shot forward with an energy hitherto unknown.

But let us proceed to the construction of railroads within the State of Indiana.



The Madison and Indianapolis Railroad was the first in actual operation in what has been known as the North West Territory, and can justly claim to be the first thread of the web which spreads itself over the map of the Northwest today. The interest which attaches to it is unique and at least three fold. Not only was it the pioneer road of this country, but it was, in its earlier days, a part of that internal improvement that sixty years ago came near swamping the State of Indiana, and again the part it played for a decade or so in determining the tide of development in Indiana most strikingly exemplifies the incalculable influence of the railroad in modern civilization. The internal improvement law enacted January 27, 1836 provided for the building at public expense of various canals, turnpikes and other improvements, eight in all and among these a railroad to run from Madison to Lafayette by way of Indianapolis, thus connecting the Ohio and Wabash Valleys with each other and the Capitol. That year the line was surveyed from Madison to Vernon; twenty-two miles. June the tenth 1838 the first consignment of iron rails was delivered at Madison. By November these were laid and the first part of the road completed from the top of the hill at North Madison to Big Creek some eight or nine miles out. The twenty-eighth of that month was set for the formal opening of the road, and the event was to be signalized by a private excursion given to the Governor and other State Officials, to Members of the Legislature and sundry Citizens who were distinguished enough to be included in the invitation. Meanwhile a locomotive had been ordered from Philadelphia, and this had been shipped by way of the Ocean, but was necessarily thrown overboard in a storm. It is not known whether it was swallowed by a great whale or not. However the officials were not to be thwarted in their plans. Over in Kentucky running out of Lexington on some stone sills was a little experimental road, the only one then in operation, west of the Alleghanies, and to this Company the M & I people sent, requesting the loan of a locomotive. In response a diminutive perambulator of eight or nine tons weight, called the Elkhorn was brought to Louisville, thence towed to Madison on a flatboat and hauled by oxen up the hills over the old Michigan road to North Madison where the track began. The excursion went off per arrangement with all the country side, and the town as well, to witness the start and swell the enthusiasm.

To the boundless astonishment of the incredulous, the engine moved off with its load "like a thing of life" and after riding as far as the rails went and back again the dignitaries were taken in carriages down to Madison, where they had a dinner and made speeches.

We of today who are used to all kinds of improvements, can scarcely appreciate the intensity of the interest which was shown on this occasion. It was a new country dominated by the commercial spirit, with undeveloped resources, and no adequate means of ingress and egress. The crying demand was for transportation facilities; upon these the future of the State depended, and the modest little railroad stretching across Jefferson County was the beginning of the fulfillment of roseate dreams.

Soon the State of Indiana went out of the railroad business and the road was leased to private parties and in February in 1843 was sold to a corporation organized under the name of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad Company, who were to complete it to Indianapolis. The work



was taken up where the State had dropped it. By June 1843 it was completed to Scipio, and by September to Elizabethtown, July first 1844 it reached Columbus and September 8th 1845 found it in Edinburgh. As it neared Indianapolis there was a sharp contest between magnates of the young Capitol for the location of a terminus. Large bonuses of land for machine shops were offered the Company and four different localities were mapped out by Mr. T. A. Morris, the Road Engineer, and submitted for consideration. The plat chosen placed the Depot on the line of South Street between Pennsylvania and Delaware, and a part of the original building still stands there.

October 1st 1847 the first train steamed into Indianapolis, where there was a repetition on a still larger scale of the jubilation that had celebrated the beginning at Madison nine years before. The liveliness of the occasion was enhanced by a circus (said to be the largest on earth) which happened to be in town on that date, and it was a grand holiday, the spirit of which can be best conveyed by the following bit of enthusiastic writing from the editorial page of the State Journal of October 4th "At about three o'clock in the afternoon the belching forth of the loud mouthed cannon announced the time of the approach of the cars from Madison. Such a collection of people as thronged the grounds adjacent to the depot, has not been witnessed in these parts since the days of Tippecanoe. They were there by acres stretching far out along the railroad, some upon trees, stumps, fences and everything which tended to raise one squad above another. Soon a dark spot in the distance was descried by those picketed upon the farthest outpost; then was heard the shrill whistle of the locomotive, echoing through hoary forests and over verdant fields, and shout answered shout, as the two iron steeds, puffing and snorting majestically, turned the curve in the road, a short distance from town, followed by two long trains of passenger and freight cars, completely filled by human beings, the ladies waving their handkerchiefs, the men and boys using their lungs in answering back the long, loud huzzas from the people awaiting their approach."

There is more of this animated and intensely enthusiastic editorial, telling of the Governor's speech on rapid transit; of fireworks, together with the remarkable performance of the circus troupe. "And thus says the editor, ended the day at ten P. M. with the public appetite for amusement and excitement satiated." Indianapolis after twenty-five years in the woods, was at last connected with the world.

The first trains on this old road were very crude. The rails were plain bars of iron, one-half inch thick spiked to a continuous stringer of oak three feet apart, which was fastened to cross ties three feet apart with wooden pins, and these ties rested on long timbers known as mud sills. The locomotive at first had no cow-catcher, for the reason that it would scarcely run fast enough to catch a good, swift cow. The engine had no cab, and very often the train would stop for the engineer to replenish the boiler with water from nearby pool or creek.

For six years following its completion the M & I Road was a great commercial outlet for Indiana and its annual receipts steadily increased. Meanwhile the railroad fever raged, and by 1852 there were no less than four or five new lines radiating from Indianapolis. Far



from being competitors of the M & I they were simply feeders to it and poured through that conduit the surplus wealth of central Indiana. Its receipts that year were more than one-half million dollars. However the building of the Bellfontaine and Indiana Central finally broke the back of the old Madison Road. The great and ever growing commercial tide, seeking the most direct outlets, found new channels, and the old one simply dwindled away. Since this the Madison Railroad has been little other than a local branch and its history is a tale that is told.

But you are familiar with the progress extent and improvements of the steam roads of Indiana.

Let us now hurriedly turn about fifty pages in the yearly mile posts of Indiana history and look in awe and amazement upon the modern electric interurban cars which go flitting all over this State at this present time. We now have in Indiana twenty-one electric railroads in operation, having a total of eight hundred and forty-one miles. Of this mileage five hundred and forty-one center in our State Capitol. There is under construction in this State at this time, a total of four hundred and eighty-four miles. Projected for construction just as soon as favorable weather opens up this year are a little over twenty-two hundred miles.

Greensburg hopes to get in the swim and secure three new roads during this year to-wit: The Columbus, Greensburg and Richmond; the Shelbyville, Greensburg and Batesville; and the Madison, Osgood and Greensburg. There is no question but that all of these will be built, that is provided that the promoters can get the necessary funds. However, around the prospects of these proposed roads which mean so much for the future life and prosperity of this City, hangs the golden halo of faith, hope and charity. But let us hope. Hope is the great ingredient in this human heart. An old lady was once known to remark that if it wasn't for hope the heart would break, she was then standing at the open grave of her seventh husband. So let us try to emulate the virtues of this old lady in saying that although Greensburg has been promised Electric Railroads seven times and failed, still we will continue to hope and trust.

The fast multiplying interurban trolley lines are continuing what the turnpike began - the highway that brought the school, the church and the market within reach of the lonely and distant farm - and its purpose is distinctly for good.

Nothing has been such a stimulus to civic pride. The tumble down village that has been satisfied with miry streets, with the absence of sidewalks pulls itself together, because it is brought into sharp contrast with the more thrifty neighborhoods of north or south. Passing to and fro, even the dull and careless eye observes the difference between neatness and squalor, between fields from which the weeds have been taken, the fences that stand trim and sound, gates that hang securely on their hinges and the waste places telling of sloth and neglect at every turn. The family that has cared very little for appearances, when the shining trolley whirls past its door, is moved to better its surroundings. The old hat that has been stuffed in the broken window is taken away and glasses supplied. The walks and



fences are mended, the battered calf skin that the dog has played with for weeks no longer lies about the dooryard.

These signs of awakening intelligence - for taste and neatness are a manifestation of intelligence - are followed by others equally marked and hopeful. The neighbor's house, with its coat of fresh paint, its wire screen doors and the windmill that pumps water into the dairy and the kitchen, kindle the spirit of emulation in the heart of a laggard, who rouses himself with a force of example to go and do likewise. Whole communities through which a trolley line has passed have been almost literally dug up out of the mud, and have been made over. What were the abodes of slip shod indifference have become the homes that suggest the thrift and comfort of New England, with the rich abundance that New England has never known. But the stimulus to outward improvement has done far more, in bringing the advantages of the town or city within reach of the country. It is no longer necessary to send the children from home that they may attend the Academy or the High School. With noon luncheons in baskets, they wait at the cross roads, the flying car halts, gathers them in, carries them swiftly away, and at night brings them back again. The concert, the lecture, the play, are as easily reached from the farm as from the suburbs of the city itself, and some times more easily. The healthy and natural desire for a change, for recreation, is gratified.

The trolley may prove the means of solving the problem - what can be done to keep the boys on the farm - to prevent them from swelling the multitude that crowd the sweat shops and attics, or walk the sidewalks of the town, where they meet destruction.

By the same token it may also be the means of sending out into the sweet, fresh air those who stifle in the overcrowded tenements. Indeed, it has always had this effect, and thousands have taken houses outside the city limits, where they can enjoy the luxury of a separate dwelling, a lawn and a garden. Many have gone still further away, especially in the eastern states, where they found it possible to do business in town, and still help or oversee the cultivation of a twenty-acre farm. With no slavish toil, they have been able to raise their own poultry, have fresh eggs, keep a cow and pigs. The return each evening from the region of staring brick walls and heated pavements is a perennial joy. There is new life in the dewy mornings and evening, in the quiet nights, with stars undimmed by smoke or by glaring arc lights; and the budding and blossoming of the orchard, the ripening of the harvest, the fall of the leaf. All these bring solace and delight - the peace that does not exist in the turmoil and selfish rush and hurry of multitudes.

Besides this purely asthetic side, there is also the social and commercial aspect of the subject. As it brings the city to the country and carries the country to the city, comfortably and swiftly, so, too, does it bind pleasant neighborhoods more closely together.

The farmer's wife, whose existence has been a monotonous round of cooking, dishwashing, baking and mending, can have her club, or attend church or the literary society at the schoolhouse, when she likes. She is no longer dependent on the horses which have a perverse way of falling lame, or being needed, when she plans an excursion, on her own account. She need trouble no one, and the team, free to work or stand



in the stall as the owner decrees, the emancipated farmer's wife, puts on her best gown, ties on her bonnet and waits for the trolley at the front gate, and has her coveted outing asking leave of no one. For no matter on what short allowance she may be kept, with such a convenience at hand to be utilized at pleasure, her commercial talent will be stirred and she will find ways and means, of her own contrivance, of having the price in her pocket, with no one to question or object.

It has been dismally prophesied by shopkeepers in the villages and smaller towns that the trolley will take their trade away - that their customers will flock to the cities, where they will have a larger assortment to select from. It is human nature to content itself with that which is within reach, if it is as good as that which is to be had with greater exertion farther off. We are willing, even, to put up with shortcomings and imperfections, rather than to go out of the way to get something a little better. Since this is true, if an effort is made in the direction of accommodation and excellence combined, there is nothing to fear on the part of the country merchant. The country grocer since the trolley makes him the competitor of his city rival, may have to cultivate enterprise.

He may have to brighten up his store, keep it clean, study to make it attractive, buy what his customers want and are willing to pay for, be courteous and obliging and require courtesy in his employees. And what if he must thus be-stir himself? He is the gainer, not a loser, and, once more, the civilized trolley works a benefit.

But while all this may be said about electric and steam railroads of Indiana - and their present perfection, still I imagine that the modes of rapid and convenient travel are only in their infancy.

Who can deny the possibility that within ten or fifteen years from now that people from the lofty and giddy heights of the air ship window, will look down from their ethereal perch and observe with scorn and contempt, the slow moving electric car, and look upon a steam locomotive with as much primeval curiosity as we do today when we observe an ox team in the unpretentious streets of Millhausen.

--Oscar G. Miller

For one who knew the late Mr. Miller, this article is so typical and sounds so much like the scholar that he was. A thinker and a bit of a prophet, he wrote better than he knew. He was an active member of the Decatur County Historical Society. - ed.

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How do I know my youth has been spent?  
Because my get-up-and-go, got up and went  
But in spite of all that, I am able to grin  
When I think where my get-up-and-go has been

Old age is golden I have heard it said  
But some times I wonder as I go to bed  
My ears in the drawer, my teeth in a cup  
My eyes on the table, until I get up



Ere sleep dims my eyes, I say to myself  
Is there anything else I should lay on the shelf  
But I am happy to say as I close the door  
My friends are the same as in days of yore

When I was young, my slippers were red  
I could kick my heels right over my head  
When I grew older, my slippers were blue  
But I still could dance the whole night thru

Now I am old, my slippers are black  
I walk to the corner and puff my way back  
The reason I know my youth has been spent  
My get-up-and-go, got up and went

But I really don't mind when I think with a grin  
Of all the places my get-up has been  
Since I have retired from life's competition  
I busy myself with complete repetition

I get up each morning, dust off my wits  
Pick up the papers and read the obits  
If my name is missing, I know I'm not dead  
So I eat a good breakfast and go back to bed

--Title and author unknown.

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FOR SALE

Having sold my farm, I am leaving for Oregon Territory by ox team, and will offer on March 1, 1849, all personal property, to-wit:

All my oxen except Buck, Bill, Tom and Jerry, two milk cows, one bay mare and colt, two ox carts, one plow, 1500 ten foot fence rails, one 100 gallon soap kettle, eighty-five sugar troughs, two spinning wheels, 30 pounds of mutton tallow, one large loom, thirty-two gallons of whiskey--seven years old; twenty gallons of apple brandy, forty gallon copper still, six fox hounds, hams, bacon and lard.

At the same time I will sell my six negro slaves; two men, 35 and 40 years old, two boys, 12 and 18 years old, and two mulatto wenches, 35 and 40 years old. Will sell all to same person. Will not separate them.

My home is two miles South of Versailles, Ky.

T. L. MOSS

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mrs. Lois Alley  
Mr. Ivan Abrell  
Mrs. Ivan Abrell  
Mr. Herbert Hunter  
Mrs. Herbert Hunter  
Mrs. Frank LaBarbera  
Mr. Virgil Mills  
Mrs. Virgil Mills  
Miss Alpha Thackery

Mr. Harry A. Thompson  
Mrs. Harry A. Thompson  
Mrs. Glen Huber  
Miss Esta Hiner  
Mr. Herschel W. Davis-Highland  
Place, Ill.  
Mrs. Emerson L. Barclay  
Mrs. Delores Baker-Aurora, Indiana  
Mr. Albert Meyer (485)



THE BULLETIN

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Volume 1 - No. 21

Greensburg, Indiana

August 8, 1964

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mr. John R. Meyer- Milwaukee  
Mr. R. Sherman Boyd- Indpls.  
Miss Ruth Moulton- Union City  
Mr. Raymond Carr (463)

\* \* \* \* \*

PARKER'S POND

Again our hosts are the William Parkers. Their home is located approximately eight miles Southwest of Greensburg in Clay township.

ROUTE FROM GREENSBURG

Follow SR 3 and 46 to the Junction West of Greensburg. Here turn left or South on SR 3. Continue South on SR 3 to the second cross road. (Look for the sign here). Turn right or West on a stone road. LOOK FOR THE FLAG POLE ON THE RIGHT AT APPROX. ONE-QUARTER MILE.

ROUTE FROM WESTPORT

Follow Sr 3 North toward Greensburg. After passing the yellow flasher at Letts, turn left or West at the second cross road. (Look for the sign here). Turn left or West on a stone road. LOOK FOR THE FLAG POLE ON THE RIGHT AT APPROX. ONE-QUARTER MILE.

PICNIC AFTERWARD

MR. AND MRS. PARKER HEREBY EXTEND AN INVITATION TO ANY OF THE MEMBERS OR THEIR GUESTS TO BRING THEIR PICNIC BASKETS IF THEY WISH TO DO SO. TABLES WILL BE PROVIDED.

OCCASION: Summer Meeting

SPEAKER: Mrs. E. A. Porter

DATE: Sunday evening, August 23, 1964. 4:00 P.M. FAST TIME

PLACE: Parker's Pond

Mrs. Porter, a devoted member of the Society, will speak on one of her favorite subjects- CEMETERIES. Hers is a cause to which she is very much dedicated. Mrs. Porter abhors the neglect and vandalism that occurs daily in some of our cemeteries, and is quite eloquent in saying so. She will have a message that will appeal to our good members- our only regret being that those who should be there will not be numbered among those present.

BRING AS MANY GUESTS AS YOU LIKE!  
EVERYBODY IS WELCOME!

\* \* \* \* \*

THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS 1964

President-----Loren Garner  
1st. Vice-President--Norman Billieu  
2nd. Vice-President--Willard Martin  
Corresponding Secy.-----Mrs. Robert Dale Brown, RFD 1, St. Paul, Ind.  
Recording Secy.-----Miss Helen K. Bussell, 711 North East Street, Greensburg, Indiana  
Treasurer-----Miss Kathryn Taney

\* \* \* \* \*

SUGGESTION

IF SO INCLINED, WHY NOT VISIT THE DECATUR COUNTY RAILWAY MUSEUM AT WESTPORT BEFORE ATTENDING THE AFFAIR AT PARKER'S POND? YOU WILL ENJOY THEIR RIDE AND DISPLAY.



## MT. ETNA SCHOOL HISTORY

This is an attempt at compiling a brief historical sketch of the Mt. Etna school, which was located in the southeast part of Salt Creek Township, Decatur County, Indiana -- just where the counties of Franklin, Ripley, and Decatur, corner. The sources of this material are from the original deed, newspaper clippings, U. S. Army discharge, and notes left by my father, Ambrose Hickman. About forty years ago, he, with the assistance of Letta Collicott Williams, wrote a fairly complete history of this school. This history cannot be located, but many of my father's notes were, and have been used in this sketch.

The name Mt. Etna came from a steep bluff on the farm of James Parmer; who gave the name of Mt. Etna to that bluff is not known. The first school by the name of Mt. Etna was an old log, one room cabin, just across the Decatur County line, in Ray Township, Franklin County, on the farm of John Barton Hickman. One night it burned to the ground. The families of that neighborhood got together and decided to ask for a school to be established for the community in Decatur County. Why Decatur County was selected of the three counties is not now known.

Among my father's papers is the original deed of James Moody, Rebecca Ann Moody, and James Parmer and America Parmer to Salt Creek Township. Only James Moody could sign his name. The other three signed by "mark."

In later years the "e" was dropped from the Moody name, and the name in that community became "Moody." The deed reads as follows: "On the part of the said James Moody and Rebecca Moody, commencing at the corner stone between the lands of said Moody and Parmer, on the Harrison Road and running west, six and one half rods, thence north, fourteen rods, thence east, six and one half rods, thence south to the place of beginning and on the part of the said James Parmer and America Parmer, commencing at the above described corner stone and running east five rods, thence north fourteen rods, thence west five rods, thence south to the place of beginning, being a part of the south east quarter of section No. twenty eight (next word is undistinguishable) range eleven, containing one acre and one rod."

This deed was executed on February 4, 1865 by Joel Colson, Justice of Peace, and was received for recording in Greensburg, Indiana April 4, 1865 at 1 P. M. o'clock, and is recorded in deed Book, Volume 8, page 31. James R. Cox was the Decatur County recorder. The price paid by Salt Creek Township for this property was \$10. The name of the trustee of Salt Creek Township does not appear on the deed.

A frame one room school house was built on this property and it is thought that the first school term opened in November of 1865, with Tichard W. Bowen as teacher. The "old timers" of the community always spoke of Richard W. Bowen as being from Kingston, but Kingston must have been his home after teaching at Mt. Etna. He was a Civil War Veteran of Company A, 82nd Rgt. Ind. Infantry Volunteers, and his discharge, now in possession of his granddaughter, Mrs. Marie Clark, Greensburg, shows he was discharged on the 6th day of July, 1865 at Madison, Indiana and that he was a native of Worcester County, Maryland. My late husband, Ralph Bowen Linville, was his grandson. Perhaps Mr. Bowen came up through southern Indiana from Madison, and was hired as



the first teacher of the new Mt. Etna school. Leonard Perry Hart and Lafayette Hickman are known to have been two of the pupils of that first school term in the new school. Mr. Bowen was said to have been a very brilliant scholar himself, but was not considered a practical man by the school patrons. He loved to read poetry to his pupils, and this was considered not contributing much to preparing the boys and girls of that day, for their rugged life ahead. How many terms Mr. Bowen taught at Mt. Etna is not a matter of record, but it was more than one.

After Mr. Bowen came a man, quite the opposite. His name is obscure, but if my memory of "tales told" serves me correctly it was Sample. He ruled by the "birch rod" so he satisfied even less than did Mr. Bowen.

The following account of the next few years at Mt. Etna, are taken directly from my father's notes.

"My first days at school are very vivid in my mind. They were spent at Mt. Etna, and I started to school in the fall of 1872. My first teacher, and for several years thereafter, was my cousin Ellen Moody, of the New Pennington neighborhood. She was a very talented forceful woman, quick to speak her mind, and high tempered. There were about 60 pupils in the winter months, some of them young men and women. Many is the time I have heard her tell the big boy, "Unless you mend your ways, you will end up on the gallows." I guess we all mended our ways, for none of us, that I know of, ended there.

"Some of my school mates during those early years at Mt. Etna were: Anderson, Ed, and Lucinda Shouse; Joe, Isaac, Lizzie, Louise, Martha and Rose Parnor -- Rose was deaf and dumb and was later sent to school in Indianapolis -- Fred, John, and Charles Myers; John Korte; Ben and Amelia Hibbler; Mary and Louise Hackman; Louise, Annie, Mary and Sophia Miller; Frank, Williard, Celia, William Henry, Milton, Ed, Sereptia, Isaac and Nathaniel Hart; John, Amelia and Mary Ceese; Robert Brooks; Jerry Whitten; Frank Wise; Sherman Risinger; Curtis, Harmon, and Jacob Collicott; Fred, Bill, Henry, Annie, Sophia, and Mary Mellow, and my own brothers Frances, Jared, Cash, Mort, and sister Ann.

"After Ellen Moody came a teacher from Buena Vista, whose name was W. M. Gard, but was called "Kenny" Gard by everyone. Spelling matches, ciphoring matches, singing schools, Friday afternoon Literaries, and wrestling matches became popular under his leadership. I recall a spelling match in May of 1875, I believe, in which Susie Wise represented New Pennington school, a mile and a half west of Mt. Etna, and I represented Mt. Etna school. I soon lost to Susie. I believe Susie went on to Greensburg, where a contest was held in the Court House, and won that contest. As I recall it, some western land offered by a James Hart was to be the prize. Whether Susie got the land or not I do not know -- but Susie could spell. Susie married my cousin, John Moody.

"Kenny Gard frequently cut the boys' hair at recess and noon. One recess he had finished just half of a hair cut for Curt Collicott when recess time was up. Mr. Gard told Curt he would go to his home that



night and finish the job. However, we all suspected he was more interested in Curt's pretty half-sister than he was in finishing the job of hair cutting.

"Mr. Gard was my teacher for the rest of the time I attended school, and it seems to me, now, that he was a good teacher, for we learned the three R's rather thoroughly.

"A disaster took place in the Mt. Etna neighborhood on my ninth birthday -- February 13, 1876. A warm Sunday afternoon, and while my mother was away helping care for a very sick child -- Willie Parner -- my sister Ann and I took off our shoes and stockings and went barefoot on the "chip pile." About 7 P. M. that night a storm struck and dipped down in the Hart neighborhood about one and one-half miles southwest of Mt. Etna. Houses and barns were blown down and much timber felled, but no loss of life. Our school house was in the path of the storm, and only the foundation was left. Luckily it was at night, and no one in the building. Our house and barn were in the path of the storm, the barn went, and all our house but the one room, in which Mother had shoved us kids, all under the bed.

"For the rest of that term we had school in an old one room log house that stood in the yard of the James Parner farm, just a short distance east of the school property -- only now the farm was owned by George Wise. It was great fun having school in the log house, heated by a big fireplace, no desks, no chairs, books or anything but the teacher, and a flock of eager boys and girls. All the big boys were kept out the rest of that term to help clean up the fallen timber, saw lumber, and help rebuild houses and barns.

"During the summer a new brick school house was built on the site of the old school. Door in one end, three windows on each side, and one end a solid wall. Inside, this solid wall, provided a place for a wonderful slate black board. Also there was a belfry, with a bell that could be heard all over the neighborhood. This was the usual pattern for the one room schools in that day, and for a good many years to come. Kenny Gard taught for several years in this new building."

This is the end of my father's notes on his school life at Mt. Etna School. I have a Currier and Ives picture, "The Rival Queens," given to my father in the spring of 1877 by W. M. Gard for "perfect attendance."

Records seem to indicate that W. M. Gard was followed by Henrietta Anderson, a local girl of 19 years of age. She had been a pupil at Mt. Etna school, perhaps under Mr. Bowen, and lived only a "stone's throw" from the school, on the farm that was known in my days as the Schutte farm. I recall one of my uncles saying that many of the big boys in the community went back to school that winter for three month's term -- more interested in the teacher than in the subject matter. Miss Anderson was a direct descendant of Thomas Jefferson. More about her later in this history.

Here we have a lapse of a few years as to any information about the school or the teachers.



William Jenkins of New Point taught at Mt. Etna for several years, and the time seems to have been in the late 80's or early 90's.

Miss Lillie Hoff of New Point came to Mt. Etna to teach in the fall of '93 or '94. In the fall of '98 she was followed by Miss Letta Collicott. Miss Collicott was the young sister of Curtis, Harmen, and Jacob Collicott who had attended Mt. Etna during my father's time. In the meantime her parents had moved from the farm near Mt. Etna to one about two miles west of the former home, so Miss Collicott never attended school there. Miss Collicott was my first teacher, and stayed in our home and I loved her dearly. When her son, Andrew, started to school, I was his first teacher. Miss Hoff and Miss Collicott married brothers, Logan and Charles Williams of New Pennington.

Miss Collicott was followed in the fall of 1904 by a young man, 19 years of age, Grover Harding, of near New Point. He was quite a brilliant young man, and frequently was far over our heads. He always spelled our school "Mt. Aetna" which we resented heartily! He spent the summer, after his first year of teaching, in Colorado. Returning home in the late summer, he died shortly of tuberculosis.

He was followed by Miss Elva Puttmann of New Point. She was a cousin of Grover Harding. Miss Puttmann drove from New Point each day, a distance of three and one-half miles. That was quite a feat in the days of mud roads and a horse and buggy. Miss Puttmann was the first teacher who did not "board" in the community.

By this time, Mt. Etna enrollment had dwindled to 14, and 7 of these were transfers from Ripley and Franklin Counties. As a result of this, Mt. Etna school closed its doors, never to reopen, in April, 1907. Miss Puttmann had taught two years here. So the life span of Mt. Etna school was from 1865 to 1907. We were consolidated with New Pennington and became a two room school.

As I recall the last pupils at the Mt. Etna school were: Roll, Joe, Ethel and Mamie Parner; Everet, Mabel, and Grace Parner, Olin Gormel; Oscar Shouse; Helen and Harry Strunck; Arthur and Clarence Myers and Anna Lee Hickman.

Some of the events that were typical of the social aspect of the school in the community should be noted, to round out the History, for the school was the community. One of the most looked forward to events of the school year was the "pie supper" or "box supper" as the case might be. This was held early in the fall, soon after the opening of the school term. The purpose was to make some money to buy the "Reading Circle" books. How we loved those books! They were our only source of outside reading. The supper was usually held on Friday night, and early on Friday afternoon milk, eggs, and sugar would be collected from the patrons and brought to the school house. Someone went to New Point for ice, and borrowed Henry Wolfe's ten gallon ice cream freezer -- usually my father made that trip. The big boys turned the freezer and when the cream was frozen it was packed in sawdust and ice to keep until evening. Each family furnished a cake, and an ice cream and cake stand was set up. The older boys and girls worked in this stand, and the younger ones worked in the candy and peanut stand. The prize job was working in the Fish Pond. That was usually settled



by drawing lots. The candy, gum, peanuts and items for the Fish Pond usually came from Kraner's store in Batesville, purchased the Saturday before by the teacher. All the young ladies of the community brought a gayly decorated box containing her pie, or supper. These were auctioned off, and young men were known to go as high as 85¢, and on one rare occasion, \$1, for the box brought by the girl of his choice. But it was great fun and all the community turned out for the event. However, on Saturday morning the teacher and some of the pupils had to clean the school and grounds, to be ready for school as usual on Monday morning.

Christmas was celebrated by a "program" given on the afternoon of the day school closed for a week's vacation -- which was December 24, if December 24 fell on a school day. This was the time the mothers and little brothers and sisters usually came. Each pupil would "speak a piece," and there were songs and dialogues. The school room would be decorated in cedar, and sometimes a Christmas tree -- we were quite festive. The teacher treated -- candy, nuts and usually an orange. Sometimes an orange for each little brother and sister that mama brought along.

Spring had its special day for us, too. Each spring, on a nice warm Friday afternoon, we had a Flower Hunt. After school "took up" on some such day, the teacher would announce that this would be a good afternoon to hunt wild flowers. Books were hurriedly put away, and off we raced, teacher with us, down through L. P. Hart's woods, along the banks of little Laughery Crick, through Mrs. Schutte's woods, and then, much more slowly, up the hill, back to the school house. It had been a happy afternoon, we had found many wild flowers, for both woods had many varieties. I wonder if any are left there now or did we destroy all of them!

On the "last day of school," again we usually had a planned program. Again we "spoke pieces," had drills and songs. I remember one year Miss Collicott gave a demonstration with Indian Clubs. Miss Collicott had been to Normal School at Terre Haute, and had taken "Gymnastics." We thought it was wonderful! If a teacher were well liked and if her return was desired by the patrons, there was usually a "surprise" dinner by the patrons and friends in the community. All gathered at a designated place, with well filled baskets, converged on the school, knocked on the door, and when the "surprised" teacher opened the door, the assembled group greeted her with yells of "surprise, surprise!" The "last day" was also the time for giving out awards. These were usually given for "perfect attendance" and "proficiency in spelling."

An important event to the teacher and pupils, during the school year, was the Annual Visit of the County Superintendent of Schools. Elmer Jerman held this position in Decatur County for a number of years. I recall his visits to Mt. Etna. Sometimes he talked to us, but mostly he listened to the classes, being conducted by the teacher. We always tried to do our very best then, for we sensed it had something to do with our teacher's "success grade" given each year by the County Superintendent.

Mt. Etna school house also served for "extra curricular activities" although that phrase was unknown then. From the 1890's until about



1904 Sunday School was held at the school house each Sunday morning. Occasionally a visiting minister came and delivered a sermon. I can remember T. J. Hart as a student at Moores Hill College doing so. On Sunday evenings "Christian Endeavor" was held for the young people of the community. One June Sunday we had a Children's Day Program. Dr. Jerman, of New Point, was always much interested in the activities of our little community, and as a special treat for the children taking part in the Program, he sent five gallons of the largest strawberries we had ever seen. After the program all the children were treated to strawberries and cream. The little Sunday School always sent a "delegation" to the 4th of July celebration -- which is a story in itself. The same youngsters who went to Mt. Etna school in the winter were, for the most part, the same ones who attended the Sunday School.

Sometimes a medicine show came through the neighborhood and had a "one night stand" at the school house. "Patriotic" meetings were sometimes held there too. I remember Neil McCallum, editor of the Batesville Tribune, speaking one afternoon after a "flag raising" at the "corner" between Decatur and Franklin Counties. I judge now that the meeting was more a "Republican" meeting than a "patriotic" one -- if I remember Mr. McCallum correctly. "Flag raising" was another story of the Mt. Etna community. Was it common elsewhere in Indiana?

The bell of the school house was a fire alarm for the community. I can remember the ringing of the bell when Mr. Miller's barn burned, and also for Mrs. Schutte's barn.

Mt. Etna school sent many young men and women from its doors -- a few achieved fame and recognition, but most of us did not. Perhaps the two best known and most famous of the men were Jacob Grant Collicott and Thomas Jefferson Hart. Mr. Collicott became an educator of national fame. He served as city superintendent of the Indianapolis City Schools, for a number of years with marked success. At the time of his death in 1937 he was the city Superintendent of the Columbus, Ohio schools. He also had served in administrative positions in the northwest. Mr. Collicott was a brother of Miss Collicott who taught at Mt. Etna. The friendship of Mr. Collicott and my father, from their boyhood days at Mt. Etna school, continued throughout their lives. Thomas Jefferson Hart was ordained in the Methodist Church and was one of the best known and beloved ministers of southeastern Indiana. Rev. Hart held pastorates in North Vernon, Dillsboro, Versailles, Brownstown and Barth Place in Indianapolis. He died in 1938 in Indianapolis. His wife was the former Lydia Gornel, who had also been a pupil at Mt. Etna.

Of the women who attended Mt. Etna, perhaps Henrietta Anderson achieved the most fame. After her brief teaching career at Mt. Etna, she, with her family, went to Kansas. There she graduated from a medical college. She was the first woman M. D. to hold membership in the Medical Association of Kansas City. For a number of years she was the secretary of that organization. She practiced her profession for many years in Kansas City. She was the only pupil of Mt. Etna school who also was a teacher there.

Others who went on to higher education and entered the teaching profession were: John F. Parner; Effa Parner; Annie Korte; Anna Lee



Hickman; Ethel Parmer; Mabel Parmer; Grace Parmer and Mamie Parmer. John F. Parmer, after teaching in Purdue, left the teaching profession and is still active with an architectural firm in Chicago. Effa Parmer McKee retired from the Noblesville Public School system two years ago. Annie Korte Siebert and Mamie Parmer Metz have not taught for some years. Anna Lee Hickman Linville retired last June from Southern Seminary Junior College in Buena Vista, Virginia. Ethel Parmer Barclay teaches in New Point schools. Mabel Parmer retired last June from Anderson High School, and Grace Parmer Ryan is teaching in the Jacksonville, Florida schools.

The Parmer family, in general, was a family talented in mechanical and engineering skills. Clyde, Ora, Claude, Roll and their cousin, Everett, all worked as such. Clyde also served as trustee of Salt Creek Township several terms. Roll, last year, retired as Superintendent of the Decatur County roads.

Bert and Arch Paramore and Howard Parmer, in early young manhood, learned telegraphy, and became telegraphers for the New York Central Railroad. Arch was stationed at Fairland at the time of his death. Howard went west and died in Nebraska. Bert was retired from the Union Station in Indianapolis and is spending his retirement years in Orlando, Florida.

This is an incomplete list of the activities and achievements of former Mt. Etna pupils. Many were "tillers of the soil" and "bakers of loaves" who made worthy contributions to the rural life of our great Hoosier state.

In the summer of 1908, my father, who then owned the farm that James and America Parmer owned in 1865, when the deed was made to Salt Creek Township, purchased from Salt Creek Township the Mt. Etna school property of "one acre and one rod," for the sum of \$66.66. John A. Meyer was the trustee of Salt Creek Township. Later the west half of the property was deeded to my father's sister, Am Parmer, who then owned the farm, originally owned by James and Rebecca Ann Moodey. Thus the original boundry lines of the farms were reestablished. Eventually the school house was torn down, and the bricks sold to go into the construction of other buildings. The equipment and Reading Circle books were moved to the New Pennington school, and the bell taken to the New Point school.

Today only the well remains as physical evidence of Mt. Etna school. To some of us -- who are now the old timers -- there will always be a Mt. Etna, for it holds many dear memories for us of teachers and school mates. We were in no wise different or unusual. There were many such one room schools in Indiana. But those of us who knew them are glad that we had that experience. Perhaps we were richer in the "good old days" than we realized.

This classic, so well written, has a particular appeal to the editor, because he knew so many of the people involved. The story is typical of any community and is further proof that Mt. Etna like any other crossroad, abounds in its local history, waiting only for someone to tell the story. Thank you, Anna Lee Linville, for a fine job, well done. - ed.



### A PIONEER WEDDING

The wedding was an attractive feature of pioneer life. For a long time after the first settlement of the Territory, the people married young. There was no distinction of rank, and very little of fortune. On these accounts, the first impression of love generally resulted in marriage. The family establishment cost but little labor--nothing more. A description of a wedding in the olden time will serve to show the progress made in society, as well as preserve an important phase of history. The marriage was always celebrated at the house of the bride; and she was generally left to choose the officiating clergyman. A wedding, however, engaged the attention of the whole neighborhood. It was anticipated by both old and young with eager expectation. In the morning of the wedding day the groom and his intimate friends assembled at the house of his father, and, after due preparation, departed, en masse, for the "mansion" of his bride. The journey was sometimes made on horseback, sometimes on foot, and sometimes in farm wagons or carts. It was always a merry journey; and, to insure merriment, the bottle was taken along. On reaching the house of the bride, the marriage ceremony took place; and then dinner or supper was served. After the meal, the dancing commenced, and generally lasted till the following morning. The figures of the dances were three and four handed reels, or square sets and jigs. The commencement was always a square four, which was followed by what the pioneers called "jigging;" that is, two of the four would single out for a jig, and were followed by the remaining couple. The jigs were often accompanied with what was called "cutting out;" that is, when either of the parties became tired of the dance, on intimation, the place was supplied by some one of the company, without any interruption of the dance. In this way the reel was often continued until the musician was exhausted.

About nine or ten o'clock in the evening, a deputation of young ladies stole off the bride, and put her to bed. In doing this, they had to ascend a ladder from the kitchen to the upper floor, which was composed of loose boards. Here, in this pioneer bridal chamber, the young, simple-hearted girl was put to bed by her enthusiastic friends. This done, a deputation of young men escorted the groom to the same apartment, and placed him snugly by the side of his bride. The dance still continued; and if seats were scarce, which was generally the case, "every young man, when not engaged in the dance, was obliged to offer his lap as a seat for one of the girls; and the offer was sure to be accepted." During the night's festivities, spirits were freely used, but seldom to great excess. The infair was held on the following evening, when the same order of exercises was observed.

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### THE LAST MEETING

The Kemble room was taxed to its capacity to hear Miss Ruth Snyder of Rockville present her program on "Covered Bridges of Indiana."

Her photography was outstanding as was her knowledge of the subject and love for her hobby.

Miss Snyder, an authority in this field, related interesting facts concerning many of the bridges in this locality and the clever



interposing of slides showing the flowers and foliage of the country side created an atmosphere which made all present feel that they, too, had taken a most enjoyable trip through rural Indiana.

In conclusion, she said that beauty can be enjoyed right here in our own home state if we only take the time to discover it.

F. S. E.

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OUR GROWING LIBRARY

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION FOR THE STATE OF INDIANA - DECEMBER 1852. This little volume, devoid of statistics, has a very interesting chapter on FEMALE TEACHERS by the first superintendent - W. C. Larrabee. This was a brief in behalf of employing lady teachers.

HISTORY OF INDIANA - illustrated, published in 1879. This leather-bound volume of 798 pages has an introductory chapter on pioneer life in Indiana and a story of one phase of that period is carried elsewhere in this issue of the BULLETIN. The two books are a gift to the Society by Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Ritter of Menlo Park, California.

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MEMBERSHIP--Open to everyone having an interest in history and his heritage. The annual dues are \$1.00 each, payable in advance. The fiscal year ends Dec. 31. Please direct all applications and renewals to the Recording Secretary.

FALL FIELD TRIP--As previously announced, our field trip will take us to the St. Paul-St. Omer area, this coming October. The chairman has been appointed and knowing how capable he is, we are looking forward to the afternoon with a great deal of anticipation.

REMINISCENCES EARLY SHELBY AND DECATUR COUNTIES by J. R. French  
This article which first appeared in part in the last issue of the BULLETIN will be concluded in the next issue, this due to circumstances beyond our control.